Hafa Adai!

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'Japan market is struggling'

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

Concepcion

The CNMI's Japan market, largely due to circumstances completely out of the CNMI's control, is severely struggling, with just a little over 800 visitors coming last December, according to Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Chris Concepcion.

He said in a recent interview that he had just met with the CNMI's partners in Japan to discuss challenges and struggles and they determined that the CNMI is struggling to revive the Japan market, similar to the experience of other destinations.

See JAPAN on Page 4

WITH NEW SUMMER EBT PROGRAM

11K NMI kids will each be eligible for $177 food assistance

» Kilili says program will pump $1.9M into CNMI economy, with multiplier effect of $3.8M

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

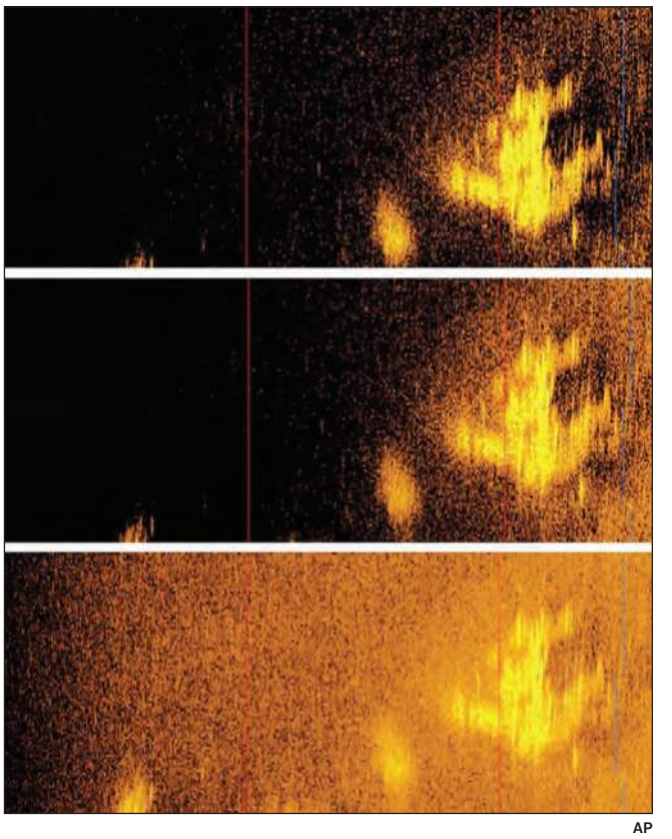
An estimated 11,000 children in the CNMI will each be eligible to receive $177 in food assistance through the new Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer program, or Summer EBT program, this year, according to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) over the weekend.

Sablan

Besides keeping children fed in summer when school meals are not available, the Summer EBT program will also pump about $1.9 million into the Marianas economy,

See KIDS on Page 4

A grainy sonar image reignites excitement and skepticism over Earhart's final flight


AP

This photo combo provided by Deep Sea Vision shows a sonar image that appears to be Amelia Earhart's Lockheed 10-E Electra.

By JAMES POLLARD and BEN FINLEY
Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP)—A grainy sonar image recorded by a private pilot has reinvigorated interest in one of the past century's most alluring mysteries: What happened to Amelia Earhart when her plane vanished during her flight around the

See SONAR on Page 4

$250K bail for man charged with involuntary manslaughter

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The Superior Court has imposed a massive $250,000 cash bail on a man accused of involuntary manslaughter after he allegedly unknowingly killed a man in defense of a security guard.

Superior Court Associate Judge

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KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
The CNMI Guma Hustisia or CNMI Judiciary in Susupe.

INSIDE

BUSINESS
Marvz Kitchen owners Marvin and Nylin Manahan didn't let a bad hand ruin their dreams.
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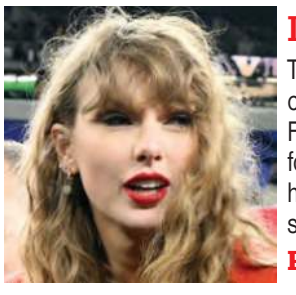
WORLD
The United States and Britain struck 36 Houthi targets in Yemen on Saturday in a second wave of assaults meant to further disable Iran-backed groups that have relentlessly attacked American and international interests in the wake of the Israel-Hamas war.
PAGE 13



LIFE & STYLE
Taylor Swift, who is holding concerts in Japan through Feb. 10, will make it in time for the Super Bowl to see her partner and football superstar Travis Kelce play.
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SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

'Factoring' pushed for $121.4M delinquent taxes owed gov't

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) is proposing that Gov. Arnold I. Palacios implement "factoring," which she believes can be a potential solution to collect a significant portion of delinquent taxes owed the CNMI government, estimated at $121.4 million as of July 2023.

Babauta said in his letter Thursday to Palacios that utilizing a financial instrument called "factoring" will unlock immediate cash flow and improve the government's financial health.

She said she is confident that this approach, if implemented transparently and responsibly, can contribute to a stronger fiscal future for the islands.

Babauta said factoring is a financial transaction where a third-party "factor" purchases outstanding invoices or receivables at a discount. The "factor" then assumes the responsibility of collecting payment from the debtor.

She said there are two types of factoring: Factoring with recourse and factoring without recourse.

Babauta said each approach has its own advantages and disadvantages, which must be carefully considered.

Factoring with recourse involves the government selling its delinquent receivables to the "factor" at a discounted rate but retains the risk of non-payment. If the "factor" is unable to collect the debt from the taxpayer, the government may be required to repurchase the receivable.

Babauta said factoring with recourse provides for a higher advance rate for the government, faster cash flow and typically lower upfront costs.

She said some of the disadvantages of this approach include the government retaining the risk of non-payment and a potential for additional costs if debts remain uncollected.

Factoring without recourse, on the other hand, transfers the full risk of non-payment to the "factor."

She said the "factor" purchases the receivables at a deeper discount, but the government is not responsible for any uncollected debts.

Under this factoring without recourse approach, the senator said, the risk of non-payment for the government is eliminated, and it provides immediate access to cash, and can improve government creditworthiness.

Babauta said its disadvantages include a lower advance rate, higher factoring fees, and slower implementation process.

She underscored the need to conduct a thorough analysis of the delinquent tax receivables and this includes categorizing the debts by age, type, and taxpayer profile to assess the potential for collection.

The senator added that it is critical to develop a clear and transparent Request for Proposal outlining the terms and conditions for factoring.

"This should specify the types of receivables to be included, the desired advance rate, fee structure, and risk allocation," Babauta said.

She said there is a need to evaluate proposals from reputable "factoring" companies—usually banks or other financial institutions and possibly the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority.

In negotiating the final terms of the factoring agreement, Babauta said, it must be ensured that the agreement aligns with the government's best interests and balances the risks and benefits of each approach.

Babauta said in implementing the factoring program, its performance must be monitored, track collection rates, expenses, and overall impact on government finances.

She believes that "factoring," with careful planning and execution, can be a valuable tool for the government to recover a significant portion of its outstanding tax receivables.

The senator said it can provide immediate access to cash to fund critical priorities, improve the government's financial standing, and reduce the burden of long-term debt.

In his Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report submitted to the Legislature last month, Palacios disclosed that to date, the Tax Collection Task Force that was formed in July 2023 has been executing installment agreements and recovering approximately $8 million.

Since launching this task force in July 2023, Palacios said, the Department of Finance has brought 226 taxpayers into compliance.

He said the Tax Collection Task Force's efforts continue in fiscal year 2024, and they expect further improvements in taxpayer compliance and government collections in the months ahead.

In order to increase the anticipated revenues of the CNMI in fiscal year 2024, Finance formed the task force upon Palacios' proposal to aggressively collect taxes due in the past 10 years.

In July 2023, Finance Secretary Tracy B. Babauta disclosed to the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee that Finance has $121.4 million in total outstanding collectibles from account receivables from the past 10 years, including $30 million in employee quarterly withholdings that were not remitted by employers.

Rotary welcomes new member

JENISHA DUBRALL
Laarni Zapanta, center, poses with Rotary Club of Saipan members after her induction ceremony last Jan. 30 during the club's weekly meeting at Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan.

By JENISHA DUBRALL
jenisha.dubrall321@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

The Rotary Club of Saipan inducted their newest member, IT&E senior manager Laarni Zapanta, last Tuesday during the club's weekly meeting at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan. Zapanta will be joining the club's community service committee.

As a new member eager to help the community, Zapanta plans to get more involved and engaged in community events, as well as network with all the leaders within the Rotary.

Zapanta recounts that her long and successful journey with IT&E got started during her sophomore year at Marianas High School when she took part in the co-op program and applied with the telecommunications company. She failed her initial interview with IT&E, but that did not faze her and she soon applied again, this time succeeding in landing a role at IT&E. She has never left IT&E since then.

As a co-op student, IT&E had always been her first choice and Zapanta says that her decision to participate in the co-op program changed her life for the better.

"It got me to where I'm at right now and I am also very thankful for all the guidance that I've had from all my mentors at IT&E. They really believed in me and molded me into becoming one of the leaders in this organization," she said.

The Public School System's co-op program exposes students to different careers outside of the classroom setting.

Zapanta's advice for co-op students is to, "Go in there, be prepared and absorb everything that you are learning from your mentor at school. Be really intentional with the job you want to apply for because you've got to give it your best."

At IT&E, Zapanta started as an intern in sales and marketing, and then became an intern in the engineering department. She finally started working full-time as a customer service representative after graduating from high school in 2008. Zapanta worked her way up to becoming a supervisor, eventually became a manager, and she is now IT&E's senior manager. During this time period, Zapanta had also received her bachelor's degree at Northern Marianas College. Zapanta recently received her master's degree in management and leadership from Western Governor's University.

For the people who want to enter the management field, Zapanta says, "You need to have a service mentality. You need the desire to serve people. Leadership is not just a decision for me, it is more of an opportunity to serve others."

February is proclaimed CTE month

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Public School System has designated the month of February as Career and Technical Education Month.

The governing body of PSS, the Board of Education, made the proclamation last Thursday at the Commissioner of Education conference room on Capital Hill to raise awareness of the role that CTE has in readying learners for college and career success.

The proclamation states that CTE Month is also a time to recognize and celebrate the achievements and accomplishments of CTE partners at the local, state, and national level. It urged everyone to become familiar with the services and benefits offered by CTE programs and to support and participate in these programs to enhance individual skills and productivity.

The proclamation—a first-of-its-kind for PSS CTE—was signed by BOE secretary/treasurer Gregory Borja and was read by Angelica Mia Carreon and Sam Santos—both of whom are CTE alumni from the Teacher Academy.

CTE director Dr. Jessica Taylor said the PSS Career and Technical Program "has worked very hard with its partners to develop and implement career pathways in construction, entrepreneurship, hospitality and tourism, nurse assistant, and teaching. We want to thank our schools and partners for making career pathways a reality for our students!"

Education Commissioner Dr. Lawrence F. Camacho said: "Experiential learning is very important because of the generation of students we have coming in and graduating out of our schools. This new generation, from Generation Z, Alpha, and all the other generations are very well-equipped and are always thinking about their career… so here we are, trying to kind of lead the way."

Borja said CTE gives students "this opportunity so they can choose a pathway that they want. I enjoy this career exploration and I think that it's going to be a great thing for everyone."

After the proclamation signing, Santos, who is Saipan Southern High School's registrar, said that CTE played a pivotal and influential role in his desire to pursue education as a career. "I was a student under the Teacher Academy program of Kagman High School back in 2013 under the guidance of Dr. Rita A. Sablan. The work and the learning style that we had throughout the course of our Teacher Academy program really cemented my desire to pursue higher education, become a counselor one day, and to be working alongside students. This has been an amazing journey thus far, a very formative journey in being an educator in the making, and I'm a proud product of the Public School System."

Carreon, a personnel specialist at PSS Human Resources, said she was in the program throughout almost all her high school education. "It was great and it helped me by giving me an overview of what working is like," she said.

PSS

The Career and Technical Education Month proclamation was signed by Board of Education secretary/treasurer Gregory Pat Borja, seated center, and was witnessed by Public School System leadership led by Education Commissioner Dr. Lawrence F. Camacho, seated far left, last Thursday at the COE Conference Room.

PSS

From left, Education Commissioner Dr. Lawrence F. Camacho, Saipan Southern High School registrar Sam Santos, Board of Education secretary/treasurer Gregory Pat Borja, PSS Human Resources personnel specialist Mia Carreon, and CTE director Dr. Jessica Taylor at the proclamation signing for Career and Technical Education Month last Thursday at the COE Conference Room.

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Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Department of Public Works
Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950

NOTICE TO ADJACENT LANDOWNERS SURROUNDING THE ROUTE 317 (GUALO RAI ROAD) IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

APPLICANT : CNMI DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
PROJECT : GUALO RAI ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT COASTAL PERMIT #SMS-2024-025

The CNMI Department of Public Works submitted a Major Siting application to the Division of Coastal Resources Management for the improvement of Gualo Rai Road on 23 January 2024. The application was assigned Coastal Permit No. SMS-2024-025.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The project begins at the intersection with Route 33 (Beach Road) and Route 317 (Gualo Rai Road) to Historia Place. The length of the project is approximately 0.59 miles. The beginning of the project consists of a coral road from Route 317 (Gualo Rai Road) and Route 33 (Beach Road) intersection to Route 30 (Middle Road) intersection. Route 317 (Gualo Rai Road) appears to be in bad shape with some areas that has smooth surface but with few irregularities. Right-of-way varies from approximately 50 to 55 - feet in width.

There are faded visible pavement markings going uphill to the intersection of Route 317 (Gualo Rai Road) and Route 30 (Middle Road) from the courthouse. There are pedestrian facilities along this intersection of roadway such as an intersection crosswalk, and sidewalk. Signage consists of street signs, and business signs. There are numerous power poles, steep slopes, existing swales and other utilities that will be considered or not in the design of this new roadway.

The proposed improvements include:

- New Hot Asphaltic Concrete Pavement, Base and Subbase
- New Pavement Markings and Signs
- New Concrete Sidewalks
- New Drainage Structures such as Concrete Swale and Rolled Curb & Gutter
- New Underground Infiltration/Detention Tank/Pipe
- Improvements of Intersections at Route 33 and Rai Road

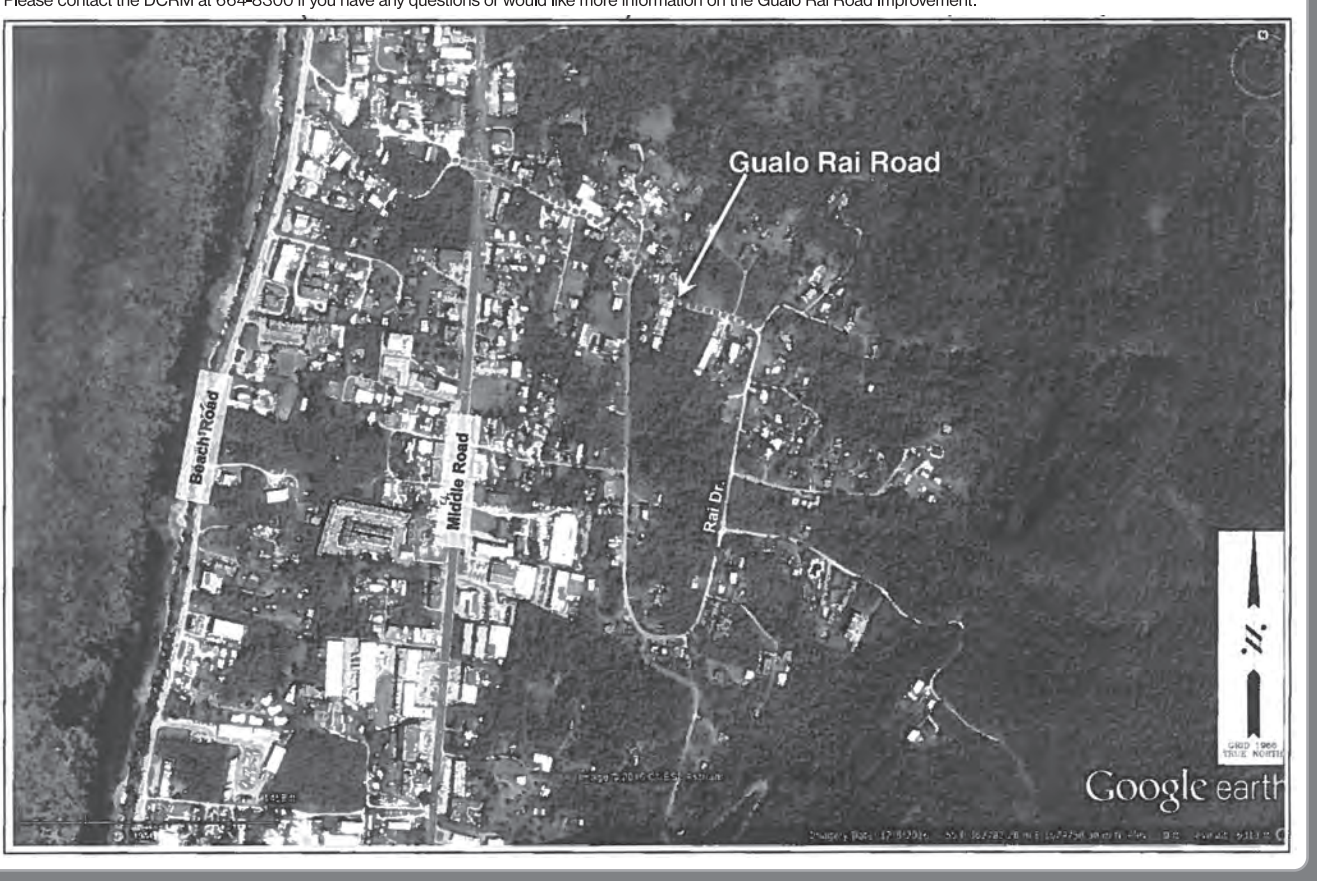
In order to meet Federal roadway design guidelines that address the management of surface water runoff and drainages, two ponding basins were incorporated into road design plans; one just east of the District Court parking lot (District Court Ponding Basin) and one on the eastern end of the project area, adjacent to Route 317 (Gualo Rai Road) (East Ponding Basin). The capacity of the proposed District Court Ponding Basin would be 304 ft^3; this ponding basin would capture overflow from the East Ponding Basin. The capacity of the proposed East Ponding Basin would be 30,434 ft^3; this ponding basin would mitigate flooding that discharges towards the District Court Ponding Basin and Route 33 (Beach Road).

Biological surveys for the proposed East Ponding Basin were conducted by CNMI Infrastructure and Recovery Program (IRP) biologists between 28 April and 1 June 2022 to determine whether federally threatened or endangered species would be affected by the proposed action. No federally threatened or endangered species were detected during the surveys.

This notice is being issued to comply with NMIAC § 15-10-206(e)(2)(i) "Alternative Adjacent Property Owner Notification".

Written comments can be submitted by mail to the Division of Coastal Resources Management, P.O. Box 501304, or emailed to permitting@dcrm.gov.mp.

Please contact the DCRM at 664-8300 if you have any questions or would like more information on the Gualo Rai Road Improvement.



'So much animosity, lies, and unbecoming behavior'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The word war between Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) and Rep. Marissa Renee Flores (Ind-Saipan) continues, with DeLeon Guerrero slamming Flores' latest "attack" on her as "so much animosity, lies, and unbecoming behavior."

DeLeon Guerrero

Flores

"I choose to stay focused, speak the truth, and continue my work for the people and our Commonwealth," said DeLeon Guerrero yesterday when asked for comments about Flores' statements during the House of Representatives session on Thursday.

In that session, Flores reminded again that DeLeon Guerrero proposes to provide the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation's Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee, which the Senate president chairs, with subpoena power to conduct her investigation.

Yet, Flores said, DeLeon Guerrero sits idle on her (Flores) House Bill 23-22 which aims to give investigative subpoena powers to the Office of the Attorney General, the highest legal office in the Commonwealth. Flores said the Senate president continues to provide her own sentiments on reform, yet has displayed inaction to support her views.

"This is not about personal views. This is about accountability. This is about combating corruption. This is about finally giving our community justice. This is about government reform," Flores had said.

She insists that, for every day her bill sits idle in the Senate waiting for DeLeon Guerrero to calendar the bill for action, public abuse of power and corruption will continue.

"So with that said, and every day it sits, colleagues, we might as well throw in the towel and live in a government designed for monarchs and communists," Flores said.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

SONAR

From page 1

world in 1937?

Numerous expeditions have turned up nothing, only confirming that swaths of ocean floor held no trace of her twin-tailed monoplane. Tony Romeo now believes his new South Carolina-based sea exploration company captured an outline of the iconic American's Lockheed 10-E Electra.

Archaeologists and explorers are hopeful. But whether the tousled-haired pilot's plane lies at the roughly 16,000-foot (4,800-meter) depth remains to be seen. And debates abound about the proper handling of whatever object is discovered.

Archivists are hopeful that Romeo's Deep Sea Vision is close to solving the puzzle — if for no other reason than to return attention to Earhart's accomplishments.

Regardless, the search is on for the first woman to fly across the Atlantic Ocean.

HOW DID DEEP SEA VISION DETECT THE OBJECT THAT COULD BE EARHART'S PLANE?

Romeo wanted more of an adventure than his commercial real estate career. His father flew for Pan American Airlines, his brother is an Air Force pilot and he has a private pilot's license himself. Hailing from an "aviation family," he'd long held interest in the Earhart mystery.

Romeo said he sold his real estate interests to fund last year's search and buy a $9 million underwater drone from a Norwegian company. The state-of-the-art technology is called the Hugin 6000 —a reference to its ability to break into the deepest layer of the ocean at 6,000 meters (19,700 feet).

A 16-person crew began a roughly 100-day search in September 2023, scanning over 5,200 square miles (13,468 square kilometers) of seafloor. They narrowed their probe to the area around Howland Island, a mid-Pacific atoll between Papua New Guinea and Hawaii.

But it wasn't until the team reviewed sonar data in December that they saw the fuzzy yellow outline of what resembles a plane.

"In the end, we came out with an image of a target that we believe very strongly is Amelia's aircraft," Romeo told The Associated Press.

The next step is taking a camera underwater to better examine the unidentified object. If the visuals confirm the explorers' greatest hopes, Romeo said the goal would be to raise the long-lost Electra.

Ultimately, Romeo said his team undertook the costly adventure to "solve aviation's greatest unsolved mystery." An open hatch could indicate that Earhart and her flight companion escaped after the initial impact, Romeo said, and a cockpit dial could lend insight into what, exactly, went wrong.

FROM ALIEN ABDUCTION TO JAPANESE EXECUTION, THEORIES ABOUND

Earhart and her navigator, Fred Noonan, disappeared while flying from New Guinea to Howland Island as part of her attempt to become the first female pilot to circumnavigate the globe. She had radioed that she was running low on fuel.

The Navy searched but found no trace. The U.S. government's official position has been that Earhart and Noonan went down with their plane.

Since then, theories have veered into the absurd, including abduction by aliens, or Earhart living in New Jersey under an alias. Others speculate she and Noonan were executed by the Japanese or died as castaways on an island.

"Amelia is America's favorite missing person," Romeo said.

Deep Sea Vision's is hardly the first foray. David Jourdan said his exploration company Nauticos searched in vain on three separate expeditions between 2002 and 2017, surveying an area of seafloor about the size of Connecticut. Those efforts were preceded by a $1 million hunt in 1999 from Nevada-based Dana Timmer. As recently as 2014, Timmer had not given up and sought to raise nearly $2 million for another go.

Between 1988 and 2002, the International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery made six trips to a different island in the western Pacific Ocean under the impression that Earhart crash-landed on a flat reef 1,800 miles (2,900 kilometers) south of Hawaii.

Hillary Clinton, then the U.S. Secretary of State, encouraged the group in 2012 when it launched a new search for the wreckage fueled by analysis of a 1937 photo believed to show the Lockheed Electra's landing gear jutting out of the island's shoreline.

'WE NEED TO SEE MORE'

Maritime archaeologist James Delgado said Romeo's potential find would change the narrative, but "we need to see more."

"Let's drop some cameras down there and take a look," said Delgado, senior vice president of the archaeological firm SEARCH Inc.

Delgado said Romeo's expedition employed world-class, cutting-edge technology that was once classified and is "revolutionizing our understanding of the deep ocean."

But he said Romeo's team must provide "a forensic level of documentation" to prove it's Earhart's Lockheed. That could mean the patterns in the fuselage's aluminum, the configuration of its tail and details from the cockpit.

Jourdan, of Nauticos, would have expected to see straight wings and not swept wings, like the new sonar suggests, as well as engines. But that could be explained by damage to the aircraft or reflections distorting the image, he acknowledged.

"It could be a plane. It certainly looks like a plane. It could be a geological feature that looks like a plane," he said.

KIDS

From page 1

with a predicted multiplier effect as high as $3.8 million, said Sablan in his *e-kilili* newsletter.

He said the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced Monday the Summer EBT program benefits, adjusting the amount for the Marianas to reflect the higher costs of food here.

According to the USDA, children in the CNMI, Guam, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands will receive $59 food assistance monthly, or $177 in total in a three-month period.

Children in the 40 states and the District of Columbia will receive $40 monthly in food assistance, or $120 in total in a three-month period.

Sablan said Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives pushed for the Summer EBT program in the Consolidated Appropriations Act; only nine Republicans voted in favor of the program.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 (Public Law 117-328) authorized a permanent, nationwide Summer EBT program beginning in 2024.

$250K

From page 1

Joseph Camacho maintained Friday the $250,000 cash bail earlier imposed on Calvin C. Tagabuel, 47, who has been charged with involuntary manslaughter and aggravated assault and battery.

Tagabuel was remanded back to Department of Corrections' custody following his bail hearing. He was ordered to return to court on Feb. 9 for a preliminary hearing. He will be arraigned on March 4.

According to court documents, the Department of Public Safety received a call on Saturday, Jan. 6, reporting an unconscious male lying outside Cool Laundry in Kagman. The man was later identified as Lark Kasian.

When police and medics arrived at the laundromat, they found Kasian lying between the stairway to the entrance of the laundry with his mouth swollen and covered in dried blood, along with a scraped knee and bloody pants. Responding officers said that Kasian was awake but was unable to speak.

Kasian was then transported to the Commonwealth Health Center that same day at 10:15pm for further evaluation and treatment. Six day later, on Jan. 12, at around 6:07am, Kasian was pronounced dead, and the cause of death was subarachnoid hemorrhage, or bleeding in the head.

DPS investigators returned to Cool Laundry on Jan. 12 to obtain surveillance footage. At the scene, one of the investigators encountered Tagabuel, who asked if they were investigating Kasian's passing. During this exchange, Tagabuel allegedly mentioned that he fought with Kasian days prior. Tagabuel agreed to be interviewed by police.

In that interview, Tagabuel stated that on the evening of Jan. 5, he had just returned to his apartment to find Kasian inside Cool Laundry while an on-duty security guard was asking for his help because Kasian was threatening to hurt them.

Tagabuel said he approached Kasian who was also approaching him and punched Kasian in the mouth, causing him to fall to the ground.

Tagabuel told police that because Kasian appeared to be "knocked out," he slapped him twice in the face to wake him up.

Police said surveillance footage acquired seem to match what Tagabuel stated.

Police also learned from the owner of Cool Laundry that on the evening of Jan. 5, Kasian was seen drinking alcoholic beverages with a group of people when he got into an argument with them.

JAPAN

From page 1

"The Japan market is definitely struggling. This isn't just a CNMI thing. The Japan market's outbound travel is down. This is for Hawaii, Guam, the CNMI, and the rest of the world. They're not traveling outbound as much as they were pre-COVID. It's a challenge for all destinations. They are coming, they are still our second largest tourist market after Korea. Granted Korea makes up about 82% of our total portfolio, but we are very pleased that we at least have a presence in Japan," he said.

Concepcion said MVA is committed to rebuilding this market.

"The yen to dollar [currency exchange] hopefully improves. This would provide a rise in arrivals. It is currently 148 yen to a dollar, so it makes it very expensive for the Japanese to travel to Saipan and anywhere in the U.S. That's a big challenge. For December, we had 888 arrivals from Japan versus 16,000 from Korea and 500 from China so it's still No. 2, but a far distant No. 2. It's been a major challenge for us to rebuild the Japan market, but it is something that the board and MVA is heavily focused on rebuilding. We've always been hesitant to focus on other markets," he said.

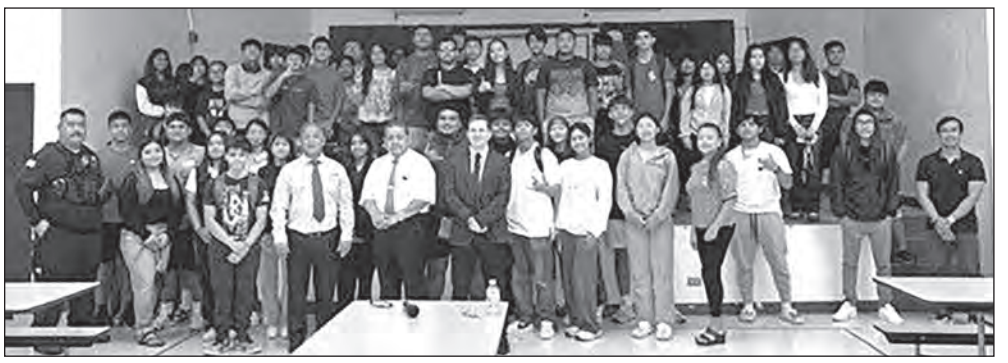
One of the major advantages the CNMI has in terms of rebuilding the Japan market, Concepcion said, is the weekly direct flights from Tokyo to Saipan.

"We have direct flights and this is just something we will continue to work with. The market will improve as the Japan economy improves. We met with United Airlines and Skymark Airlines to discuss industry updates to see where things are going. United currently operates three weekly flights from Tokyo to Saipan," he said.

Concepcion added that MVA has already started to tackle some challenges faced by tourists arriving to the CNMI. MVA has already requested a possible schedule shift in airline schedules to allow tourists to make the most of their day immediately after arriving on Saipan, he said.

"We discussed some issues and challenges we are facing in regards to their schedule but that is still under review with United's headquarters in Chicago. We hope to hear from them in the next few weeks on whether they are able to shift their timing so flights depart and land in the daytime. That would help the market. Today, the schedule is challenging. You arrive at 2am and it's pretty late and you're paying a room for one night already, which means you just missed 11 hours of your hotel time," he said.

Supreme Court holds appellate session at Kotten Tinian



CONTRBUTED PHOTO

The Supreme Court launched the 35th anniversary of the Commonwealth Judiciary on Tinian last Jan. 19.

CONTRBUTED PHOTO

The Supreme Court heard oral arguments at Kotten Tinian and visited students at Tinian Jr. Sr. High School and Tinian Elementary School to launch the 35th anniversary of the Commonwealth Judiciary.

The Supreme Court heard oral arguments last Jan. 19 at Kotten Tinian and visited students at Tinian Jr. Sr. High School and Tinian Elementary School to launch the 35th anniversary of the Commonwealth Judiciary. In May 2024, the Judiciary will commemorate the Commonwealth Judicial Reorganization Act of 1989, which established the Supreme Court and Superior Court.

At Kotten Tinian, the Supreme Court held appellate arguments in two cases.

In *Estate of Rogolifoi v. Estate of Rogolifoi*, the estates of two siblings argue the appeal of a quiet title action over land determined to belong to the estate of only one sibling in 1953 and a resulting $2.97-million land taking compensation. The estate of Rita appealed the Superior Court decision that found Rita held the land as the Carolinian customary trustee for her entire family. The court stated that any heirs of Rita's brother, Silvestre, would not have had notice in 1953 that Rita's daughter was not acting as their trustee. Rita's estate argues that the Superior Court relied on inaccurate testimony, made unreasonable factual findings, and did not properly consider whether the estate of Silvestre's claim was time-barred.

In *Commonwealth v. Onopey,* the Commonwealth appeals the Superior Court's dismissal of a criminal case with prejudice. Tim Onopey was charged with one count of sexual assault in the first degree. The Commonwealth moved to dismiss the charge without prejudice. Onopey objected to the dismissal without prejudice, and requested dismissal with prejudice, which the Superior Court granted. The Commonwealth argued that the Superior Court abused its discretion.

In the afternoon, the Supreme Court held two Justices in the Classroom events, at Tinian Elementary School and Tinian Jr. Sr. High School. Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro, Justice Perry B. Inos, and law clerk Nathan Ford met with high school students. They discussed opportunities for the students to get involved with Judiciary-led activities and answered questions about court procedure.

"The students were excited for the visit and it sparked a few students' interest in Judiciary Programs," said Lizabeth Perzinski, principal of Tinian Jr. Sr. High School. "It was very special for them to be included in this visit, and to have the opportunity to participate in moot court and mock trial during the next school year. Because of the justices' visit, I was able to recruit a teacher to be the advisor for these programs."

Justice John A. Mangloña, along with law clerks Patrick Quimby and Paige Lehman, and marshal Bradley Lizama spoke with students at Tinian Elementary. Mangloña and staff answered the students' questions about the branches of government and the role of judges and justices in deciding cases.

To celebrate this milestone year, the Judiciary will be organizing a series of monthly events commemorating its achievements and progress. For updates on future 35th anniversary programming, visit www.NMIJudiciary.gov. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality
Division of Coastal Resources Management
P.O. Box 501304, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-8300; Fax: (670) 664-8315
www.dcrm.gov.mp

Eli D. Cabrera
Administrator

Richard V. Salas
Director, DCRM

PUBLIC NOTICE OF MEETING OF THE CRM AGENCY OFFICIALS

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang through the Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) hereby give notice that a CRM Agency Officials meeting will be held on **Tuesday, February 13, 2024** at **2:30PM** at the DCRM Learning Center, Suite 301, Gualo Rai Center II, on Chalan Pale Arnold Road in Lower Gualo Rai, Saipan.

Virtual public participation will continue and encouraged via video conferencing through Zoom link: hhtps://zoom.us/j (*Meeting ID: 6706648315*) or join via telephone by calling the DCRM office at (670) 664-8300 for connection assistance and most updated information as Zoom meeting access code may change.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Adoption of Agenda
- D. Adoption of November 30, 2023 Meeting Minutes

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

III. PERMIT APPLICATION REVIEW
1) CRM Permit Application No. SMS-2023-102
Project: CONSTRUCTION OF 42 UNITS HOUSING PROJECT
Applicant: MR. TING JIANG TANG DBA CANAAN REALTY, LLC.
The Canaan Realty, LLC is proposing to construct 43 Units Housing Rentals. The development includes office units, recreational rooms, community center, onsite laundry facility, mom and pop store, security house and fence. The project is situated on leased private lands identified as Lot Nos. 361-5, 361-R4, 361-6, TR 2254-3, TR 22553 and TR 22554-2NEW in As Lito, Saipan.
- a. Agencies' Discussions
- b. Agencies' Determination – *for Certification of Completeness*

IV. OTHER MATTERS

V. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and submit written or oral testimony regarding the above agenda items. (Note: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session).

/s/ RICHARD V. SALAS
Director, DCRM

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS
P.O Box 500830, Saipan MP 96950
Tel. No (670) 234-3751/52/52 • Website: www.dpl.gov.mp • Facebook: facebook.com/DPLCNMI

NOTICE OF PROPOSED LEASE OF PUBLIC LAND

In accordance with Section 106 (b) of Public Law 15-2, the Department of Public Lands hereby gives notice of its intent to lease certain public land in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Any interested parties of the general public may submit comments, data, views, or arguments of alternative proposals for the lease of the public land. As further provided by Public Law 15-2, the following pertinent information is required to be published.

i. The proposed lease of public land is described as Lot 011 L 03, containing an area of approximately 241,037 square meters, Lot 011 L 04, containing an area of approximately 337,564 square meters, and Lot 011 L 02 R/W, containing an area of approximately 2,984 square meters situated in Unai Dankulu, Saipan. A map showing the location of the parcel is available at the Department of Public Lands for inspection.

ii. The prospective Lessee is Suwaso Corporation dba Coral Ocean Resort. The list of officers for Suwaso Corporation dba Coral Ocean Resort: Hosik (Brian), Shin, as President, Eunpyung (Calvin), Park, as Vice President and Ji Eun Lee, as Secretary/ Treasurer.

Principal shareholders of Suwaso Corporation is Micronesia Resort, Inc.

iii. The proposed lease is compliant with DPL regulations and was negotiated by the officers and directors of Suwaso Corporation dba Coral Ocean Resort, mainly by Hosik (Brian) Shin and Gloria Cavanaugh.

iv. The Lessee shall use the premises solely for the purpose of a Hotel and Golf Complex.

The term of the proposed lease agreement is 40 years with an extension of up to 15 years with approval of the Legislature in accordance with P.L. 20-84 (1 CMC § 2806(c)(1)).

The proposed annual rental during the term of the lease agreement is based on a percentage of the appraised fair market value of the property plus the applicable percentage of Business Gross Receipts in DPL's regulation.

A copy of the proposed lease agreement may be obtained at the office of the Department of Public Lands, located on the 2nd floor of the Joeten Dandan Commercial Building in Dandan, Saipan; 1st floor of the De'Ana Commercial Building, Songsong Village, Rota; or the 1st floor of the PM Building, Tinian. A copy will also be available online at www.dpl.gov.mp

v. The Department of Public Lands has received no alternative proposals to lease the subject public land in Unai Dangkulu, Saipan.

vi. The Secretary of the Department of Public Lands shall accept written comments, views, arguments or alternative proposals from interested parties on or before February 12, 2024, at the Department of Public Lands offices located in Saipan, Rota or Tinian. A public hearing will be held if requested during the comment period.

NUTISIA PUT I MAPROPONI NA ATKILON TÅNU´ PUPBLIKU

Sigun gi Seksiona 106 (b) gi Lain Pupbliku 15-2, i Dipåttamentun Tanu' Pupbliku mannånå'i huyung nutisia guini put i intension-ñiha para u ma'atkila metton na tanu' pupbliku giya Saipan, Commonwealth gi Sangkattan na Islas Mariånas. Maseha håyi na pattidå intirisao gi halum hinirât pupbliku siña muna'hålum upiñon, infotmasion, pat testimoniun kinontra gi tinahguin prinoponi siha para i atkilon nu i tanu' pupbliku. Komu mapribeni mås mo'na ginin i Lain Pupbliku 15-2, i tinattitiyi pettanesi na infotmasion manisisita para u mapupblika.

i. I maproponi na atkilon tanu' pupbliku madiskribi komu Lot 011 L 03 ni kunsissisti kåsi 241,037 square meters, Lot 011 L04, ni kunsissisti kåsi 337,564 square meters, yan Lot 011 L02 R/W, ni kunsissisti kåsi 2,984 square meters ni gaigi gi hålum Unai Dangkulu, iya Saipan. I måpa ni ina'a'annuk i lugåt managuaha gi ufisinan Dipåttamentun Tanu' Pupbliku para inspeksión.

ii. I prospective lessee i Suwaso Corporation dba Coral Ocean Resort. I listan nu ufisiåt siha para i Suwaso Corporation dba Coral Ocean Resort: Si Hosik (Brian), Shin, komu Presidenti, Eunpyung (Calvin), Park, komu Sigundu Presidenti yan si Ji Eun Lee, komu Sekritåriu/Tresureru.

I prinsipåt na shareholders nu Suwaso Corporation sa i Micronesia Resort, Inc.

iii. I maproponi na atkilon ha tattiyi i regulasion DPL siha yan ginen manegosiu ni ufisiåt yan direktot nu Suwaso Corporation dba Coral Ocean Resort, mayotmenti ginen as Hosik (Brian), Shin yan si Gloria Cavanaugh.

iv. I lessee debi na u usa i lugåt put atyu ha' na rason nu i Hotel and Golf Complex.

I tema nu i maproponi na kontråtan atkilon sa' kuarenta (40) åñus na tiempu yan i ekstensión asta kinsi åñus na tiempu yan i inaprueban i Lehislatura sigun yan i P.L. 20-84 (1 CMC § 2806(c)(1)).

I maproponi na atkilon gi kada' såkkan gi durântin teman kontråtan i` atkilon mapega gi put sientus i bålin "appraised fair market" i propiedåt yan i aplikåo na put sientus nu i "Business Gross Receipts" gi halum i regulasion DPL.

v. I kopian nu i maproponi na kuntråtan atkilon siña machuli' gi ufisinan i Dipåttamentun Tanu' Pupbliku, ni gaigi gi sigundu (2nd) na bibiendan i Joeten Dandan Commercial Building iya Dandan, Saipan, primet (1st) na bibiendan i De'Ana Commercial Building, iya Songsong Village, Luta; pat i primet (1st) na bibiendan i PM Building, giya Tini'an. I kopia debi lokkui' na u managuaha online gi www.dpl.gov.mp

vi. I Dipåttamentun Tanu' Pupbliku tåya marisibi ni håfa na tinahguin inofresi siha ni para u ma'atkila i suhetu na tanu' pupbliku gi Unai Dangkulu, giya Saipan.

vii. I Sekritåriun Dipåttamentun Tanu' Pupbliku debi na u aksepta tinigi' upiñon, infotmasion, testimoniun kinontra pat tinahguin prinoponi siha ginin i manintirisão na pattida siha gi pat åntis di Fibreru 12, 2024, gi ufisinan Dipåttamentun Tanu' Pupbliku siha ni gaigi giya Sa'ipan, Luta pat Tini'an. I inekkunguk pupbliku siempri magopti yanggin marikuesta gi durånti i tiempun upiñon.

ARONGORONGOL PPWOMMWOL ATKILÓÓNOL FALUWEER TOULAP

Sángi Tálil 106 (b) reel Alléghúl Toulap 15-2, Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap re isiisiwow arongorong igha re mángemángil rebwe atkkilaay faluweer toulap llól Seipél, Commonwealth Téél Falúw kka Efáng llól Marianas. Schóó kka re tipáli sángi toulap emmwel rebwe isiisilong ischil kkapas, data, views, ngare angiingil ppwomm ikka aa siiwel ngáli ppwommwol atkkilóónol faluweer toulap. Re bwal ayoora sángi Alléghúl Toulap 15-2, arongorong ikka e ffil ebwe akkatééwow e amwirimwiritiw:

i. Ppwommwol atkkilóónol faluweer toulap e bwáá bwe Lot 011 L 03, e lo 241,037 reel square meters, Lot 011 L 04, iye e lo bwe 337,564 reel square meters, me Lot 011 L 02 R/W, iye e lo bwe 2,984 reel square meters iye e lo Unai Dankulu, Seipél. E bwáálo wóól móópal falúw eyoor me Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap reel ubwe amwuri.

ii. Ppwommwol schóól atkkilóón nge Suwaso Corporation dba Coral Ocean Point. List-al officers ngáli Suwaso Corporation dba Coral Ocean Point: Mr. Hosik (Brian), Shin, bwe President, Eunpyung (Calvin), Park Liang, bwe Vice President me Ji Eun Lee, bwe Sekkretóóriyo/Treasurer.Principal shareholder-il Suwaso Corporation nge Micronesia Resort, Inc.

iii. Ppwommwol atkkilóón e angúúngú fengál me mwóghutughutúl DPL me e abwungubwung sángi officers me directors-il Suwaso Corporation dba Coral Ocean Point, spesiatmente Hosik (Brian) Shin me Gloria Cavanaugh.

iv. Schóól atkkilóón ebwe yááyá falúw ngáli Hotel and Golf Complex. Ppwommwol abwungubwungúl atkkilóón nge fááigh ráágh fengál me aláálááyi ngáli seigh me limoow ráágh fengál me átirowal Sou Allégh (Legislature) llól angúúngú fengál me P.L 20-84 (1 CMC § 2806(c)(1)).Ppwommwol atkkilóón ghal ráágh atol abwungubwungúl atkkilóón yeel nge e lo reel percentage of the appraised fair market value reel falúw fengál me application percentage of Gross Receipts llól mwóghutughutúl DPL.

v. Pappidil ppwommwol abwungubwungúl atkkilóón nge emmwel ubwe bweibwogh me reel Bwualsiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap me 2nd floor me Joeten Dandan Commercial Building me Dandan, Seipél; 1st floor me De'Ana Commercial Building, me Apilómwol Songsong, Luuta; me 1st floor me PM Building, Tchiliyól. Ebwal yoor pappid emmwel ubwe amwuri online me www.dpl.gov.mp

vi. Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap rese bweibwogh siiwelil ppwommw reel atkkilóónol faluweer toulap iye e lo Unai Dangkulu, Seipél.

vii. Sekkretóóriyal Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap re bweibwogh ischil kkapas, views, angiingi ngare siiwelil ppwommw sángi schóó kka re mwuschel wóól ngare mmwalil Febreero 12, 2024, me Bwulasiyol Ammwelil Faluweer Toulap iye e lo Seipél, Luuta ngare Tchiliyól. Rebwe ayoora arongorongol toulap ngare re tingór atol mille comment period.

GMS Falcons going to NJSDA nationals, Math Court regionals

Jan. 27, 2024 was quite the active day for Green Meadows School Falcons and their coaches. Both Math Court/League and the National Junior Speech and Debate Association competitions were held last Saturday with over 60 students competing from kinder 5 to 8th grade.

THANK YOU CONTRIBUTED PHOTO/

Admiral Herbert G. Hopwood Middle School would like to thank counselors Jill Pladevega, Marjorie Kintol, Ashley Roberto, and Livia Pangelinan for their hard work and dedication to students. National School Counseling Week 2024 is Feb. 5-9, 2024, to focus public attention on the unique contribution of school counselors within U.S. school systems. National School Counseling Week, sponsored by ASCA, highlights the tremendous impact school counselors can have in helping students achieve school success and plan for a career. National School Counseling Week is always celebrated the first full week in February. The 2024 theme is "School Counseling: Standards-Based, Student-Focused."

GMS celebrated three 8th grade students who all qualified for the national level competition in their respective divisions—Nelisa Nicole Acaba's "The Women of Lockerbie" in Dramatic Interpretation, Andrea Fhe Remilloza's "Love Always Hurts" in Declamation, and Isabella Marie Mallari's "To This Day" in Poetry.

During the Math Court K-2 Division competition siblings Arianne Therese (1st grade) and Liam Roy (2nd grade) Buston both qualified for regionals at their grade level. This brings the total number of qualified students to 15. The other Falcons who have qualified in previous competitions are:

1st Grade
- Katrina Zoe C. Dayrit
- Naa Kowah Lartey

2nd Grade
- Nathan Angelo Reyes
- Jaira Hope Quindoza
- Kira H. George

3rd Grade
- Ian Noel L. Escarcha
- Autumn D'Ann DLG. Pangelinan
- Rhussel R. Umali

4th Grade
- Christopher Leyland Duenas
- Jade Haven Quindoza

5th Grade
- Albert Miguel Santos

Middle School

6th Grade
- Jamie Andrea A. Palabay

"Once again, GMS would like to congratulate all the hardworking Falcons, parents, and teacher/coaches for all the preparation and work. Keep soaring high Falcons!" said GMS in a press release. ***(PR)***

Inafa'måolik-Tipiyeew Matters Project launched

The Northern Marianas Humanities Council is excited to announce the launch of the Inafa'måolik-Tipiyeew Matters project, which is funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities as part of the United We Stand: Connection Through Culture initiative.

IT Matters was created to examine cultural values, perspectives, and experiences as they relate to biases and conflicts between various social groups within our community. The project aims to reveal the breadth and depth of the community values within the NMI, as well as promote awareness of the attitudes, perspectives and experiences that contribute to conflict within and between NMI cultural groups.

As part of the project activities, an online community-wide survey will be deployed to identify and better understand essential features that define the values within and across NMI cultural groups. Dr. Theresa "Isa" Arriola, will participate as the project's scholar to assist with designing the survey and interpreting results.

The Marianas Values Conference, scheduled on Saipan in July, will provide a forum to review the project's findings and engage the Chamorro and Carolinian community in conversations that promote understanding of the influence of values on community dynamics.

"We are thrilled to have this opportunity to localize a national initiative with the potential to clarify our community values and promote greater harmony and cohesion across our diverse community."

As part of the project's data collection activities, the council is seeking 25 high school and/or college students currently living in the CNMI (Saipan, Tinian, and Rota) to form a team that will conduct filmed interviews with members of the Chamorro and Refalúwasch community. Interested students with basic film editing skills are encouraged to submit materials to be considered for this opportunity by Feb. 14, 2024.

Selected participants will receive a $500 stipend and training to perform these filmed interviews. For more information about IT Matters and participation requirements, visit nmhcouncil.org/it-matters.

If you would like more information, please contact Leeani Villagomez by phone: (670) 235-4786, or email: leeani@nmhcouncil.org. ***(PR)***

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-24-004

COMMONWEALTH DRIVE WATERLINE INSTALLATION PHASE I PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Construction of Commonwealth Drive Waterline Installation Project in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists of installation of new distribution line along Commonwealth Drive; connecting the new waterline to existing water mains; and installation of a new pressure reducing valve. The work is also inclusive of installation of new service laterals and water meters with individual pressure reducing valves, and relocation or reconnection of existing service laterals to new distribution line also with individual pressure reducing valve. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system. CUC requires the Project to be completed in 270 calendar days from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **January 23, 2024 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-24-004, Commonwealth Drive Waterline Installation Phase I Project"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 14, 2024**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of *fifteen percent (15%)* of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety.

A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 26, 2024**, to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email at *manny.sablan@cucgov.org* with a copy to Mr. Aristotle Anicete, Project Engineer – via email at *aristotle.anicete@cucgov.org* and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Senior Administrative Technician – via email at *christie.sablan@cucgov.org*

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

PROCUREMENT SERVICES • CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB24-BECQ/RT-42400040

SUBMISSION DATE: FEBRUARY 29, 2024 TIME: 09:00 A.M.

"OFFICE SPACE LEASE FOR BECQ ON ROTA"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUNIS VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL (https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT BLDG NO. 12552, ANATAHAN DRIVE, CAPTIOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL & COASTAL QUALITY BY FEBRUARY 20, 2024, TO MRS. ZABRINA S. CRUZ VIA EMAIL AT zabrina.shai@becq.gov.mp

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ RICHARD V. SALAS
ACTING ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ BRIEN S. NICHOLAS JR.
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055•SAIPAN•MP•96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

AMENDED REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING DESIGN AND PLANNING SERVICES

CHARLIE DOCK EXTENSION PROJECT
PORT OF SAIPAN
PROJECT NO. CPA-SS-001-24

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA is soliciting statements of professional qualifications from interested Consultants for Architectural and Engineering (A/E) Design and Planning Services for the Charlie Dock Extension Project at the Port of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Project No. CPA-SS-001-24.

The project is being funded by the U.S. Maritime Administration and is in accordance and compliance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations, Section 40-50-202, Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the RFQ package. Electronic copies may be made available upon written request to Ms. Wendi Prater at wprater@cnmiports.com or Ms. Sheri Llagas at receptionist@cnmiports.com.

Questions regarding this request for qualification statements must be submitted to Ms. Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager, via email to wprater@cnmiports.com or hand delivered to the CPA Administration Office by no later than 5:00 p.m. CHST, Friday, January 26, 2024.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00 p.m. CHST, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2024.** Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/ LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director

Date: January 18, 2024

BOG wins Money Smarts Banky Award

HAGATNA, Guam—Bank of Guam was named among the top extraordinary banks in the United States by The Institute for Extraordinary Banking.

Bank of Guam was recognized with the institute's Money Smarts Banky Award for its Financial Empowerment Program as well as its commitment to strong community banking. This recognition is given to top community banks across the country to help people find the best banks in their communities.

BOG

Bank of Guam is recognized with the The Institute for Extraordinary Banking's Money Smarts Bank Award. Pictured, from left, are Roxanne Emmerich, The Institute for Extraordinary Banking chair and founder; and Lesley-Anne Leon Guerrero, Bank of Guam senior vice president and chief experience officer.

Financial Empowerment is an important part of our CSR Strategy. As an organization and members of our community, we have a responsibility to do what we can to strengthen the financial stability of our youth and families. Our efforts over the years have allowed us to build strong partnerships with various organizations that represent our underbanked population. Through those relationships, we are now able to better understand their diverse needs and challenges. We remain committed to building on this foundation and setting new benchmarks in financial empowerment for all.

"Winning this award is not just a recognition of our program's success—it's a reflection of the continuing work we do to bring to life our founder's dream of creating a more financially inclusive and empowered society for generations to come," said Bank of Guam president and CEO Joaquin P. L.G. Cook.

"Community banks recognize aspirations, dreams, and silent hopes of small businesses and individuals within their communities. The heart and soul of an extraordinary community bank is the visionary blueprint for the community's success and ability to enact that plan. Those banks were chosen to receive this year's Banky awards,"said The Institute for Extraordinary Banking chair and founder Roxanne Emmerich.

The Extraordinary Banking Awards emphasize the indispensable contribution community banks have on their communities—how deeply woven into the fabric of the community they are. Their role in elevating the national economy is profound yet often misunderstood.

Community banks are the beacon that illuminates their local communities and the pillar of small business success.

For the full list of 2023 Bank Award recipients, visit https://www.extraordinarybanking.com/2023-banky-awards-winners/. ***(BOG)***

FEMA Region 9 hosts webinar on how to do business with FEMA

OAKLAND, Calif.—Federal Emergency Management Agency chief component procurement officer and FEMA Region 9 are facilitating a webinar for businesses in American Samoa, Arizona, California, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, Hawai'i, Guam, Nevada, and the Republic of Marshall Islands Federated States of Micronesia that want to learn how to do business with FEMA. The webinar will review FEMA's small business program, category management, contracting, regional coordination, and include presentations from FEMA, the U.S. Small Business Administration and Minority Business Development Agency.

Information about contracting during a disaster, private sector coordination, and FEMA's Small Business Program is located at FEMA.gov.

Webinar information

The webinar is Feb. 13, 2024, 10am-1pm PDT. Pre-registration is required, and must be completed by Feb. 12, 2024, and attendance is limited to four participants per company. Closed caption is available. Webinar attendance does not guarantee contract award. For additional information, including the agenda, visit: Region IX-How to Do Business with FEMA | FEMA.gov.

Registration URL: https://fema.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_aXIy9B3qT-4GgS9oh2o1wPQ.

Upon registration completion, you will receive an email notification from Zoomgov.com that you are registered for participation in this event.

Contact us

If you have any questions, please contact FEMA Region 9 Office of External Affairs: Private Sector at FEMA-R9-Private-Sector@fema.dhs.gov. ***(PR)***

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-24-009

ROTA WATER CAVE ENCLOSURE/ REPLACEMENT OF WOOD STAIRS

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Rota Water Cave Enclosure / Replacement of Wood Stairs in Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists, in general, of the installation of a new 2-inch Sch. 40 G.I. Pipes Stairs and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

This project is funded by a grant from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Public Law 20-61.

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **150 calendar days** from the date of award of the contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **January 24, 2024 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-24-009, Rota Water Cave Enclosure / Replacement of Wood Stairs Project"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Comme cial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 13, 2024**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of *fifteen percent (15%)* of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety.

A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 26, 2024**, to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email at manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Edgar Tuazon, Project Engineer – via email at edgar.tuazon@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Senior Administrative Technician – via email at christie.sablan@cucgov.org

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp Website: http://www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com

INVITATION FOR BID (IFB)
NMHC IFB 2024-003

(This ad is paid by NMHC by HUD funds)

BID SUBMISSION DATE: February 09, 2024, 2:00 p.m.

DANDAN WATER TANK REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Project Package will be available on December 26, 2023, at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, during regular working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday thru Friday except CNMI holidays. A non-refundable payment of One-Hundred Dollars ($100.00) is required for each set of the project package. Payment must be made payable to NMHC and receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the project package at the reception counter.

The provisions on the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference will be held at the NMHC Central Office located in Garapan, Saipan on **January 09, 2024, 10:00 a.m.** In addition, a Mandatory site Visit/Inspection of the project site will be conducted immediately after the Pre-Bid Conference. Failure to attend both the Mandatory Pre-bid conference and the Mandatory site Visit/Inspection will be considered a non-responsive bidder.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-9447 or via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net during business hours, 7:30am – 4:30pm Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/ JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

/s/ MERCED "MARCIE" M. TOMOKANE
Chairwoman
NMHC Board of Directors

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
NMHC RFP 2024-001

(This is ad is paid for NMHC with HUD funds)

BID SUBMISSION DATE: February 09, 2024, 2:00 p.m.

INSTALLATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION (CUC) UNDERGROUND POWER SERVICE TO CRITICAL LOADS PROJECT

Proposal Package will be available on December 26, 2023, at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, during regular working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday thru Friday except CNMI holidays. A non-refundable payment of One-Hundred Dollars ($100.00) is required for each set of the project package. Payment must be made payable to NMHC and receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the project package at the reception counter.

The provisions on the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

A Mandatory Pre-Proposal Meeting will be held at the NMHC Tinian Field Office located at the NMC Campus, San Jose, Tinian, on **January 11, 2024, 10:00 a.m.** In addition, a Mandatory site Visit/Inspection of the project site will be conducted immediately after the Pre-Proposal Meeting. Failure to attend both the Mandatory Pre-Proposal meeting and the Mandatory site Visit/Inspection will be considered a non-responsive proposer/offeror.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-9447 or via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net during business hours, 7:30am – 4:30pm Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/ JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director
Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC)

/s/ MERCED "MARCIE" M. TOMOKANE
Chairwoman
NMHC Board of Directors

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXIV, Issue No. 25

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MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

In scuttling bipartisan border deal, GOP shows it wants chaos, not solutions

The apparent collapse in Congress of a bipartisan agreement on America's southern border has exposed two glaring truths regarding today's Republican Party:

One, despite all the apocalyptic rhetoric from congressional Republicans, the party does not actually want to solve the border crisis—at least not while a solution could be politically advantageous to a Democratic president.

And two, the central driver of this and so much other dangerous dysfunction on the political right—former President Donald Trump—has become the Republican establishment he once challenged. His wish is his party's command, no matter how detrimental to the country.

The GOP, at Trump's explicit direction, is intentionally sabotaging a border deal it would otherwise embrace just because it doesn't want constructive progress on President Joe Biden's most vulnerable issue.

That's not some kind of opposition talking point; Trump and his key allies aren't even hiding it.

"A Border Deal now would be another Gift to the Radical Left Democrats," Trump declared in a statement late last week. "They need it politically."

The message was clear to Trump enablers like Sen. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D. He told CNN before the terms of the deal were even announced that congressional Republicans would "take their lead" from Trump, noted that Trump is "in a campaign" against Biden—and that "if Joe Biden suddenly got religion and supported a border deal that actually reduced the flow of illegal immigration, that would be good for (Biden) politically."

Meaning, Republicans must oppose it for Trump's sake.

Indeed, after weeks of holding military aid to Ukraine and Israel hostage to demands for increased border security, congressional Republicans last week were apparently flummoxed by Biden's remarkable about-face, in which he declared he is ready to "shut down the border right now."

The proposed bipartisan deal contained almost nothing that Democrats have demanded, not even a path to citizenship for immigrants brought here as children. It would make gaining asylum more difficult even for those who enter the country legally and would completely shut down the asylum process during high-activity periods on the border.

As the GOP's top Senate Republican negotiator, Sen. James Lankford, R-Okla., put it, the agreement "is a shutdown of the border and everyone actually gets turned around." In essence, the deal is a complete capitulation by Biden on border issues.

Yet congressional Republicans, buckling to Trump's utterly self-serving opposition, suddenly refuse to take "yes" for an answer.

House Speaker Mike Johnson has declared the agreement

See IN on Page 9

Groundwater is vanishing worldwide, but it can be rescued

By MARK GONGLOFF
Bloomberg Opinion

Mark Gongloff is a Bloomberg Opinion *editor and columnist covering climate change. He previously worked for* Fortune.com, the Huffington Post *and the* Wall Street Journal.

Unless thirsty aliens come and take it, Earth's water isn't going anywhere. It's just becoming increasingly difficult for thirsty humans to access. But there's reason to hope we can do a better job of that even as the planet warms.

The bulk of Earth's water, about 97%, is in salty oceans and thus useless for drinking or growing food. Of the 3% that is fresh, most is locked in ice sheets and glaciers, many of which are melting rapidly into the oceans thanks to climate change. A relative few drops of fresh water are available in ponds, lakes and rivers, which are easily accessible but also vulnerable to pollution, overuse and drought.

Humanity's biggest source of fresh water—representing just 0.8% of Earth's total water—is in underground aquifers. Decades of drought, pollution and overuse are shrinking even that precious supply, and rising sea levels threaten to spoil even more of it with saltwater incursions. A recent survey of groundwater levels at hundreds of wells worldwide found that 71% have fallen since the start of the 21st century. Groundwater loss worsened at more than half of the studied wells during that time.

But the survey also revealed, encouragingly, that groundwater disappearance isn't universal. Losses are most common in areas that are both dry and heavily farmed. Some of those places have managed to protect and even start replenishing their aquifers. The Abbas-e Shargi basin in arid southwestern Iran was losing groundwater at a rate of nearly a foot a year before the turn of the century, according to the study data. It has regained nearly 3 feet of water a year in the past two decades thanks to diverted water from the Karkheh Dam.

The Upper Santa Cruz basin near Tucson, Arizona, was drying up as quickly as the Abbas-e Shargi until water authorities started a campaign to recharge local aquifers. Using water from the Colorado and other nearby rivers, along with treated wastewater, many groundwater reservoirs in dry southwestern Arizona are now growing despite a warming climate and the worst megadrought in 1,200 years.

"Tucson was able to basically turn off some wells," said Sharon Megdal, director of the Water Resources Research Center at the University of Arizona in Tucson, who was not involved in the study. "That water was no longer needed to serve the public because the city was storing and recovering surface water."

Of course, surface-water supplies like the Colorado River increasingly have their own problems with climate, mismanagement, pollution, saltwater incursion and drought. They are no magic fountain for replenishing groundwater supply. Demand-side fixes—taxes, often, but also conservation drives—are necessary, too, even if they are more politically painful.

The Bangkok basin in Thailand, part of a system that supplies water to more than 11 million people, suffered from groundwater loss for decades—more than 2 feet a year between 1980 and 2000, according to the study data. The land under Bangkok was sinking, and the quality of drinking water was deteriorating.

Soon after the turn of the century, the Thai government started to ratchet up groundwater-use charges it had first imposed in the 1980s, increasing them from 3.5 baht per cubic meter to 17 baht. Lo and behold, local aquifers recovered, so much that the government was able to slightly lower the charges in 2012. Rising costs recently forced Thai authorities to raise rates for the first time in 23 years.

One thing Tucson and Bangkok have in common, aside maybe from relentless heat and beautiful landscapes, is what Megdal calls "water consciousness." Both struggled to manage water supplies for a long time before finding solutions, making it easier to ask people to sacrifice. As the planet warms and rainfall becomes less predictable, more sacrifices are inevitable.

"Somebody in Tucson might say we use less water than others," Megdal said. "But there's still room to use even less. There are lots of actions authorities can take to stress the need to reduce water use."

In some lucky places, nature will do much of the work: More than half the aquifers that have refilled since the turn of the century were in areas where rainfall had increased, according to the study. Unfortunately, such areas are increasingly rare. As the planet warms, more people will need to develop water consciousness: understanding the scarcity of this resource and, when necessary and done fairly, pricing that resource to reflect its true value.

—With assistance from Elaine He.

Could Taylor Swift be the biggest election influencer of them all?

By DAVID L. NEVINS
The Fulcrum

David Nevins is co-publisher of The Fulcrum and co-founder and board chairman of the Bridge Alliance Education Fund.

There is a long history in the United States of presidential candidates receiving important celebrity endorsements that many argue have tipped the tide from one candidate to another.

As far back as 1920, when Warren Harding was endorsed by film stars including Lillian Russell, and 40 years later, when John F. Kennedy was endorsed by Rat Pack members Sammy Davis Jr. and Peter Lawford, celebrity endorsements have been highly courted by presidential candidates.

More recently, Oprah Winfrey endorsed Sen. Barack Obama early in the 2008 race when he still lacked much of a national following; in 2020, Joe Biden received endorsements from stars such as Tom Hanks, Bruce Springsteen, Brad Pitt and Jennifer Lawrence just to name a few.

Celebrity endorsements aren't limited to Democratic candidates. Ronald Reagan in 1980 was endorsed by Frank Sinatra, Pat Boone and Dean Martin, and in 1968 sport stars Wilt Chamberlain and Joe Lewis threw their support behind Richard Nixon.

But today, in the age of social media where the influence and reach of celebrities is greater than ever, one superstar stands above the pack. All eyes are on Taylor Swift as we wonder whether she will endorse Biden over Donald Trump.

The youth vote is critical in the 2024 presidential election and many believe that, due to the age of the two likely nominees, young voters simply won't show up on Election Day. But enthusiastic support from the 34-year-old pop star, who endorsed Biden in 2020, may get huge numbers of them to vote.

Of course the president desires her support, but even if Swift doesn't endorse Biden, her influence can be felt if she simply asks her followers to get out and vote. Her power was proven in the last election when one Instagram post led to over 30,000 new voter registrations. Swift has a staggering 279 million Instagram followers.

We have seen her power as an influencer during football games as she cheered for her boyfriend, Travis Kelce of the Kansas City Chiefs. In early October, her attendance at a game and repeated shots of her cheering contributed to 27 million people tuning in—the most viewers since the previous Super Bowl. And 55.4 million people watched the game between the Chiefs and the Baltimore Ravens on Jan. 28, making it the most watched AFC championship game in NFL history.

Already MAGA supporters are showing their concern as conspiracy theories abound suggesting the Kansas City Chiefs are headed to the Super Bowl as part of a psychological plot organized by Biden and the Democratic Party.

Whether preemptive attacks on Swift by Republicans will be amplified and whether Trump himself will dare to go after her are questions that could have a greater impact on the upcoming election than important policy debates such as abortion, immigration, and support for Israel and Ukraine.

And so is the world of politics in the United States.

Jury's $83 million Trump verdict is $1 for every reason he should not be president

By LEONARD GREENE
New York Daily News

I don't understand America anymore.

Imagine if the company where you work spends months trying to fire you, and when they can't fire you, they just decide not to renew your contract and hire someone else for the job.

But you won't leave quietly. Instead, in a selfish effort to keep your job, you incite a violent riot that gets people killed, and puts the company at risk.

Then on your way out the door, after they take away your key card and your company phone, you help yourself to sensitive documents and store them in your home.

You leave the job, reluctantly, but you can't stop criticizing your replacement, or whining about how the removal process was rigged against you.

You vow to get your job back. But instead of being on your best behavior, you run afoul of the law, over and over again. This prosecutor says you're a cheat, that plaintiff says you're a rapist.

A jury says you owe that plaintiff $83 million for destroying her reputation.

America, meet Donald Trump.

Only in America could a president get impeached—twice—stage an insurrection, perpetrate an alleged fraud with a business that launched him to stardom, be accused of sexual assault and defamation, and still be in a position to run the country again.

Well, that's not entirely true. That happens in plenty of other countries, mostly third-world nations and dictatorships.

But Trump, when asked if he would abuse power or punish his enemies if he returned to the White House, assured voters he has no plans to be a dictator.

"Except for day one," the presidential hopeful said. "We're closing the border and we're drilling, drilling, drilling. After that, I'm not a dictator."

This is what Trump said before he won the Iowa caucuses, before he won the New Hampshire primary last week.

This is what he has said and done for years, and people still vote for him.

I don't understand America anymore.

President Joe Biden says Trump is a threat to democracy.

"He's saying it out loud," said Biden, a Democrat who is running for reelection. "The other day he said he wants to be a dictator only on one day, wipe out the civil servants and a whole range of other things," Biden told donors at a campaign event in Philadelphia. "He embraces political violence instead of rejecting it. We can't let that happen."

Even one day as a dictator is one day too many. Even one day abusing power is a day we can't get back.

A lot can happen in a day. The world can change in 24 hours. Supreme Court judges can be appointed. Abortion rights can be overturned. Affirmative action can be wiped out.

Jan. 6 happened in just one day, while Trump was still president.

Still, Trump is still cruising to the Republican nomination, with all his challengers dropping like flies.

Chris Christie, gone. Ron DeSantis, adios. Tim Scott, making kissing noises in the background.

All before a single primary vote was cast.

That leaves former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley, South Carolina's former governor, as the only challenger left standing. But her days are probably numbered.

Meanwhile, that federal jury ruled that Trump must pay $83 million in damages for defamatory statements he made while denying he sexually assaulted the writer E. Jean Carroll.

Eighty-three million. That's one dollar for every reason Trump should never be president again.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Happy Black History Month

Black History Month was established for good reasons, as the African-Americans of America were the only race to face slavery in America. The founders of America may have founded our nation but it was Africans and their descendants who founded and established "equality" for all in America. Too many Americans often take Black History Month for granted, especially those of color who benefited from the plight and struggle of Africans to be free and African-Americans who fought for equality in America that culminated in the 1964 Civil Rights Act. But even with that Act, there is still an ongoing battle to take people of color backwards being led by the GOP and even supported by a Supreme Court that has been overrun by their emissaries, no thanks to Sen. McConnel who refused to let President Obama replace Supreme Court justices whom Trump eventually appointed, expecting them to be his proxies, and they haven't let him down yet. We can only vote and pray for our democracy.

Black History Month was established in February by Carter G. Woodson because many Black accomplishments took place in February. He was one of the founders of the Association for the Study of African-American History. As my MaDear once told me: "Us Black folks have to learn how to toot our own horn because no one will do it for us, except for the whites who are truly righteous people." In fact, I can count the number of people on one hand who have come out publicly to support me—a former student, a former governor, and a fellow Democrat. But I understand the ugly politics and bigotry that have caused most to be afraid to speak up for me, but that's OK, I appreciate it even more when you tell me personally anyway.

But God isn't sleeping because our home, the Gladys "MaDear" Bennett House, was declared a National Historic Site on Feb. 7, 2019. It gets better because the Tennessee state legislature recently named the walkway over the expressway near our home for our MaDear, the "Gladys MaDear Bennett Memorial Walkway." This walkway and signs are the first overpass you see entering Memphis after crossing the Mississippi River into Memphis from Arkansas and the last signage you see leaving Tennessee. Our family will be unveiling these signs later this year once the state finish repairing the walkway and putting up the signs. I know my critics will try to twist and even make me look bad for sharing my MaDear's story but I'm sure the silent majority can appreciate me sharing this truth about my MaDear.

Now readers know where I got my activism from—my MaDear who was a missionary and activist in our community who started the first school for Blacks to learn a trade in Memphis after leaving the cotton fields. I have been trying to help the people of the CNMI for over two decades, only to be met with opposition of bigots and political assassins that only served to prevent progress in the CNMI. Black folks had to be 10 times better and now America is full of African-American leaders even in the White House but that is not the same picture in the CNMI because if you are not a local—you know the rest, which is the sad truth that needs to change. Contrary to what some leaders are saying behind my back, I'm not the enemy and I'm here to help the local people. Heck, all three of our daughters have even contributed to the CNMI, setting-records at the highest level in the Micronesia Games and in beauty pageants at the state, national, and international beauty pageant levels.

It may be called Black History Month because it was Blacks fighting the battles against racism and bigotry in America but the battles were for all people of color, including the Chamorro and Carolinian people, just as Dr. King said in his "I Have a Dream" speech. So, enjoy Black History Month and celebrate the true founders of "equality in America"! I love you unconditionally CNMI and have a Happy Black History Month.

Ambrose M. Bennett
Kagman III, Saipan

IN

From page 8

dead on arrival in his chamber. Lankford earned a resolution of condemnation from his home state's GOP for the apparently high crime of working across the aisle for a solution on an issue Republicans earnestly pretend to care about.

"Pretend," it turns out, is the key word there. As even the conservative *Wall Street Journal* editorial board put it recently, Biden can now claim "with cause" that Republicans "want border chaos as an election issue rather than solving the problem."

Make no mistake: The GOP, in cowering fealty to Trump, has now confirmed it would rather burden America by continuing that chaos than to allow Biden even a shared victory on the issue. Voters should remember this the next time Republicans claim (as they will almost daily in this election year) to be the party of border security.

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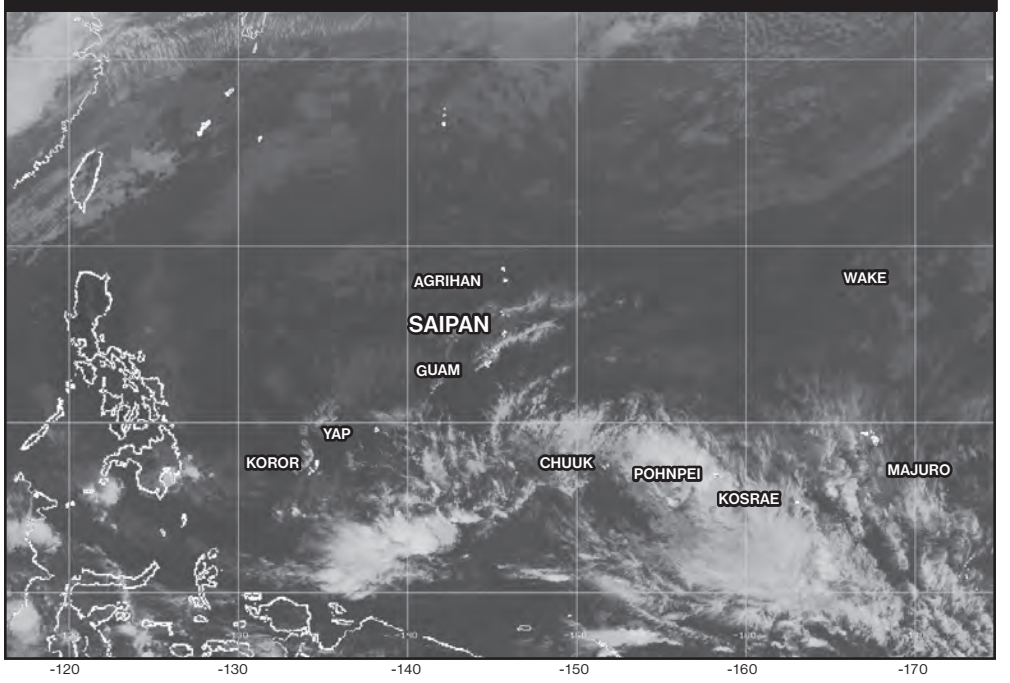
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Windy. Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. Northeast winds 20 to 30 mph.	Breezy. Partly cloudy. Isolated light showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of light showers.	Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of light showers.	Breezy. Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of light showers.
84 76°	84 76°	84 76°	84 76°	84 76°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:22 AM SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Mainly isolated showers continue to cross the region, but the showers have been a little higher in coverage early this morning. Gusty winds will persist over the next 24 hours, with morning observations showing this trend continuing. The water temperature at the Ipan buoy is 82 degrees.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Mostly Cloudy	83° / 76°
Palau	Thunderstorm	85° / 77°
Yap	Thunderstorm	84° / 78°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	86° / 80°
Pohnpei	Showers	84° / 80°
Kosrae	Showers	84° / 80°
Majuro	Showers	85° / 79°

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	75° / 59°
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	45° / 27°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	68° / 64°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	79° / 65°
London	Showers	48° / 39°
Los Angeles	Cloudy	66° / 54°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	86° / 73°
Melbourne	Sunny	81° / 55°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	78° / 68°
New York	Mostly Sunny	40° / 25°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	52° / 37°
Paris	Showers	57° / 46°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	48° / 30°
Rome	Cloudy	61° / 54°
Salem	Partly Cloudy	69° / 47°
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	42° / 22°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	43° / 25°
Tokyo	Sunny	55° / 36°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	44° / 29°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:45 AM	6:16 PM
Tuesday	6:45 AM	6:17 PM
Wednesday	6:44 AM	6:17 PM
Thursday	6:44 AM	6:17 PM
Friday	6:44 AM	6:18 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	1:59 AM	1:23 PM	-
Tuesday	2:59 AM	2:19 PM	-
Wednesday	4:01 AM	3:21 PM	-
Thursday	5:02 AM	4:27 PM	-
Friday	6:01 AM	5:34 PM	-

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
5:25 AM	High Tide	1.33
9:13 AM	Low Tide	1.19
2:17 PM	High Tide	1.54
10:24 PM	Low Tide	-0.25

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2024

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	3:10AM	10:30PM	4, 7 via ICN
7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	2:15AM	6:10AM	Daily
OZ626	3:10AM	6:55AM	4,7
7C3403	4:40AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3461	2:40PM	6:45PM	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
OZ702/625	12:05PM	1:40AM+1	3, 6 via ICN
UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
7C2306/3462	11:15PM	1:30PM+1	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1	Daily

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3462	08:00AM	1:30PM	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW307	7:45PM	1:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	8:20PM	1:40AM+1	3, 6
7C3404	10:15PM	3:35AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

Truck Driving Bootcampers take part in completion ceremony

GCC

Graduates of the Guam Community College Truck Driving Bootcamp pose with Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero and their instructors during the completion ceremony last Tuesday.

Guam Community College recognized 16 individuals for successfully completing the Truck Driving III and IV Bootcamps, last Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2024 at the GCC Multipurpose Auditorium.

Bootcampers participated in classroom instruction, simulation training and actual live-driving instruction and training, to prepare them to pass the Department of Revenue and Taxation Division of Motor Vehicles Class C License exam. In addition, upon successful completion, participants will receive certificates of completion in OSHA-10, Heartsavers (CPR/First Aid), Work Ethic, and WorkKeys®.

Latino H. Santos, Bootcamp III completer, stated that his experience with the bootcamp was not an easy task but he was glad that he signed up for it. "I started this bootcamp in 2021 and we were all still going through the COVID-19 pandemic and me and my fellow boot campers were separated for safety," said Santos. "It wasn't easy on my partner as well, Stacia Marianao. She just gave birth to our son, Titus, and she had to hold down the fort while I went to the bootcamp. I know this wasn't easy for her either."

GCC's Continuing Education and Workforce Development program secured employer sponsors that have offered successful completers jobs within their companies: Smithbridge Guam, Inc.; Guahan Waste Control, Inc. dba: Mr. Rubbishman; JL Baker & Sons; CTSI Logistics Guam; Ambyth Shipping & Trading, Inc.; Ambros Inc.; and Hawaiian Rock Products.

"Truck driving is very vital to our economy," said Dr. Mary A.Y. Okada, GCC president. "During the COVID pandemic one of the things we recognized was if we don't have truckers on the road then the goods aren't going to get from the Port to where we need them, in the stores. We are thankful to your successful truck driving boot campers for signing up for this and sticking with it. But I really also want to recognize your family and support team for being there for you so you can finish this boot camp."

"Programs like this really help uplift our entire community. We need you in the workforce. All of these higher education models have a common thread, that common thread is higher education has the ability to uplift our lives and bring opportunity to all of us," said Sen. Amanda Shelton, committee chairperson for the Committee on Higher Edcuation, 37th Guam Legislature. ***(GCC)***

UH reprints UOG professor's book about Guam era when leprosy patients were exiled

UOG

Dr. Anne Perez Hattori, orofessor of History, CHamoru Studies, and Micronesian Studies at the University of Guam, holds the first and reprinted editions of her book, *Colonial Dis-Ease: US Navy Health Policies and the Chamorros of Guam, 1898–1941.*

It was a different time in Guam. Between 1898 and 1941, CHamoru people afflicted with leprosy were banished from Guam and sent to a leprosarium in the Philippines.

University of Guam professor Dr. Anne Hattori authored a book about this period when the U.S. Naval Administration controlled Guam.

The Navy's health care regime in Guam at the time "was a vehicle through which U.S. colonial power and moral authority over CHamorus were introduced and entrenched," remarked Hattori, a native CHamoru and author of the 264-page book, *Colonial Dis-Ease: US Navy Health Policies and the Chamorros of Guam, 1898–1941.* Hattori is a professor of History, CHamoru Studies, and Micronesian Studies at UOG.

First published in 2004, the book got new traction when the University of Hawaii Press recently reprinted *Colonial Dis-Ease* in paperback. The first print was hardcover.

"The story of Guam's Hansen's Disease patients was not well published at the time I did my research, and it was an important topic to look at," Hattori added.

"Medical experts, Navy doctors, and health care workers asserted their scientific knowledge as well as their administrative might and, in the process, became active participants in the colonization of Guam," Hattori said.

"Changes to Guam's traditional systems of health and hygiene placed demands not only on CHamoru bodies, but also on their cultural values, social relationships, political controls, and economic expectations," according to Hattori.

Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero recently signed a proclamation commemorating January 2024 as Leprosy Awareness Month.

The book is available on UH Press.com

For more information, contact, contact Hattori at hattoria@triton.uog.edu. ***(UOG)***

Coast Guard honors legacy; final Makapu'u Lighthouse keeper returns after 50 years

USCG

Ron Cianfarani, retired U.S. Coast Guard senior chief petty officer and the final manual caretaker of the Makapu'u Lighthouse, received a guided tour from the Coast Guard's Aids to Navigation Team Honolulu, in Jan. 24, 2024. Built in 1909, the Makapu'u lighthouse was a fully manned and operational station until becoming automated in 1974. The lighthouse has been under the maintenance and care of ANT Honolulu for the past 50 years.

HONOLULU, Hawaii— Ron Cianfarani, retired U.S. Coast Guard senior chief petty officer and the final manual caretaker of the Makapu'u Lighthouse, received a guided tour from the Coast Guard's Aids to Navigation Team Honolulu, Jan. 24, 2024.

Built in 1909, the Makapu'u lighthouse was a fully manned and operational station until becoming automated in 1974. The lighthouse has been under the maintenance and care of ANT Honolulu for the past 50 years. Cianfarani, currently in retirement, took the opportunity during his vacation to revisit the lighthouse and the grounds where he served.

The visit provided Cianfarani with a chance to reflect on the earlier era when lighthouse keepers and crews lived onsite, managing maintenance, repairs, and responding to emergencies such as shipwrecks. Significant changes incorporating solar panels, batteries, and modern LED lights have improved efficiency and visibility to the lighthouse, allowing the beacon to continue assisting mariners for years to come.

Established in 1789, the U.S. Lighthouse Establishment played a key role in constructing, maintaining, and repairing lighthouses, providing navigational aid to mariners. Evolving into the U.S. Lighthouse Service in 1910, it eventually merged with the United States Coast Guard in 1939.

While the responsibilities of a lighthouse keeper have evolved with technological advancements, the fundamental mission persists: ensuring the safety and navigation of mariners along coastlines. Cianfarani's visit underscores the enduring legacy of maritime history and the United States Coast Guard's commitment to safeguarding coastal waters. ***(USCG)***

Business

‘Lucky’ Marvz Kitchen opens atop Saipan Vegas

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
EDITOR

Marvz Kitchen owners Marvin and Nylin Manahan didn’t let a bad hand ruin their dreams.

The food stall that offers Filipino-American cuisine got its start in Chalan Kanoa in early 2023, but had to abruptly stop operations due to the $27-million Beach Road rehabilitation project.

“After many years of work and hard financial decisions, the opportunity finally arose and we opened up Marvz Kitchen in Feb. 16, 2023 in CK. However, due to the construction that was ongoing in the area, it was short-lived as we had to close because of it. Yet opportunity found us yet again and we were able to open here at the Saipan Vegas just a few weeks ago,” said the Manahans’ son, Billy.

Obviously named after one of the owners, Marvz Kitchen relocated to its new location last Jan. 18—exactly the birthday of Marvin—and primarily serves as the restaurant for patrons of Saipan Vegas downstairs and the regular Bingo events at the adjacent room of the restaurant.

Since opening last month, the 100-seat restaurant’s bestsellers are its barbecued ribs (made from FDA-approved meat), cheeseburgers, and siopaos.

Daily specials for Saipan Vegas customers and walk-ins, meanwhile, vary from beef and pork tapa one day, to pancit the next day, and fried chicken and burger steak on another day.

The younger Manahan said what really sets Marvz Kitchen apart from other restaurants on Saipan is the cooking expertise his father brings literally to the table.

“It’s little bit of things of what my dad worked with over the years. My dad has an extensive history of working with food in hotels and restaurants on Saipan. So, he’s had a lot of experience making food and he really enjoys just cooking for people. It’s a passion that he’s discovered throughout his career,” said Billy.

MARK RABAGO

Marvz Kitchen owners Marvin and Nylin Manahan poses with their son, Billy.

MARK RABAGO

Marvz Kitchen can comfortably sit 100 customers and is open from Monday to Saturday, 10am to 9pm.

Because it’s such a large venue, Marvz Kitchen is open for hosting large events and private parties (birthday, christening, baptism, gender reveals, etc.).

This coming Valentine’s Day, they’re cooking up a cross promotion with Saipan Vegas where an $80 Day of Hearts dinner package comes with a free Saipan Vegas Resort room and a complimentary glass of wine. Marvz Kitchen will also soon offer steak night using only FDA-approved Tinian beef. Currently, any $30 purchase at the restaurant gives customers a free play voucher for Saipan Vegas.

In a way, Marvz Kitchen is truly the culmination of the dreams and aspirations of their parents.

“They were always something of dreamers, like many others who sought better opportunities for themselves and to escape the situation they were in as children. Throughout most of their lives they’ve been hard at work striving to reach that goal, a better life, a better situation than the last, stopping at nothing and never accepting to be content, just continuous growth. Throughout these endeavors my father found a talent and passion for cooking, my mother found it in customer relations and business managing,” said Billy.

MARK RABAGO

Marvz Kitchen’s pork ribs meal.

MARK RABAGO

Marvz Kitchen’s cheeseburger meal.

The persistence of Marvz Kitchen’s owners to pursue their lifelong dreams is a testament to their grit and determination that makes the CNMI’s current economic slump pale in comparison.

“It’s not often that an opportunity presents itself not just once but twice. Not many people get that chance and those who do aren’t always so fortunate. Despite the risks, despite the situation, if we had not tried and not continue our endeavors, we would have regretted never taking the chance at all,” said Billy.

Marvz Kitchen is located on the second floor of Saipan Vegas along Beach Road in Chalan Kiya. It’s open from 10am to 9pm, Monday-Saturday. For more information or for reservations, call (670) 785-4802, email marvzkitchenspn@gmail.com, or message them on Facebook: Marvz Kitchen.

Court sets June hearing for JetBlue-Spirit appeal of ruling blocking $3.8B merger

BOSTON (AP)—JetBlue and Spirit Airlines will have to wait until June before a federal court hears their appeal of a ruling that blocked JetBlue’s proposed $3.8 billion purchase of the smaller rival.

The schedule set Friday by the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston is a month later than the airlines had hoped. They asked for an expedited hearing in May so the court could rule before a July 24 deal-closing deadline in their merger agreement.

The appeals court ordered the airlines to file their prehearing briefs Feb. 26, with a response by the U.S. Justice Department due by April 11.

The Justice Department sued to block the merger last year, saying it would reduce competition and drive up fares, especially for travelers who depend on low-fare Spirit.

In January, a federal district judge in Boston sided with the government and blocked the deal, saying it violated antitrust law.

New York-based JetBlue had argued that the merger would help it compete more effectively against bigger airlines. However, the price tag looks less attractive because of continuing losses and other problems at Spirit, which is based in Miramar, Florida. Last week JetBlue warned that it might terminate the agreement.

Europe’s farmers are struggling, however some sympathetic consumers can’t afford their food

BOUSSY-SAINT-ANTOINE, France (AP)—Truck driver Jeremy Donf understands French farmers are struggling and he wants to support local food producers. But like many consumers, buying French produced food isn't always an option.

Farmer protests across Europe this week have highlighted how farmers and households are both hurting these days because of multiple factors, including persistent inflation, high interest rates and volatile energy prices.

“We understand their anger because we value farmers. What are we going to do if they are not here? We won’t eat. Such protests are important,” Donf said.

But as he weighed Spanish-grown lemons in his suburban Paris supermarket, Donf noted that most of the produce around him was imported. And when French-grown food is available, not everyone can afford it. In a Paris market this week, Moroccan clementines and Polish mushrooms cost about half the price of their French counterparts.

The farmer protests drew widespread public support in France, even from truckers like Donf whose livelihood was threatened by the highway blockades that were part of the protests. Donf lives in the Paris suburb of Boussy-Saint-Antoine but comes from the French Indian Ocean island of Reunion, where farming is important and many people buy directly from local farmers.

Governments including France, Spain and Greece agreed in recent days to pump hundreds of millions of euros into the farming sector to calm the protesters. The EU also granted concessions to farmers, sensitive to voter concerns ahead of European Parliament elections in June.

At a nearby farmers’ market this week, several shoppers specifically chose more expensive French meat and vegetables over cheaper imports, in part spurred by the recent protests.

Nation

Can Trump be on the ballot?

WASHINGTON (AP)—A case with the potential to disrupt Donald Trump's drive to return to the White House is putting the Supreme Court uncomfortably at the center of the 2024 presidential campaign.

> » It's the Supreme Court's biggest election test since *Bush v. Gore*

In arguments Thursday, the justices will, for the first time, wrestle with a constitutional provision that was adopted after the Civil War to prevent former officeholders who "engaged in insurrection" from reclaiming power.

The case is the court's most direct involvement in a presidential election since *Bush v. Gore*, a decision delivered a quarter-century ago that effectively delivered the 2000 election to Republican George W. Bush. It comes to a court that has been buffeted by criticism over ethics, which led the justices to adopt their first code of conduct in November, and at a time when public approval of the court is diminished, at near-record lows in surveys.

The dispute stems from the push by Republican and independent voters in Colorado to kick Trump off the state's Republican primary ballot because of his efforts to overturn his 2020 election loss to Democrat Joe Biden, culminating in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

Colorado's highest court determined that Trump incited the riot in the nation's capital and is ineligible to be president again as a result and should not be on the ballot for the state's primary on March 5.

A victory for the Colorado voters would amount to a declaration from the justices, who include three appointed by Trump when he was president, that he did engage in insurrection and is barred by the 14th Amendment from holding office again. That would allow states to keep him off the ballot and imperil his campaign.

A definitive ruling for Trump would largely end efforts in Colorado, Maine and elsewhere to prevent his name from appearing on the ballot.

The justices could opt for a less conclusive outcome, but with the knowledge that the issue could return to them, perhaps after the general election in November and in the midst of a full-blown constitutional crisis.

The court has signaled it will try to act quickly, dramatically shortening the period in which it receives written briefing and holds arguments in the courtroom.

Trump is separately appealing to state court a ruling by Maine's Democratic secretary of state, Shenna Bellows, that he was ineligible to appear on that state's ballot over his role in the Capitol attack. Both the Colorado Supreme Court and the Maine secretary of state's rulings are on hold until the appeals play out.

The former president is not expected to attend the Supreme Court session this coming week, though he has shown up for court proceedings in the civil lawsuits and criminal charges he is fighting.

Whatever the justices decide, they are likely to see more of Trump, who is facing criminal charges related to Jan. 6 and other issues. Other election-related litigation also is possible.

In 2000, in Bush v. Gore, the court and the parties were divided over whether the justices should intervene at all.

The conservative-driven 5-4 decision has been heavily criticized ever since, especially given that the court cautioned against using the case as precedent when the unsigned majority opinion declared that "our consideration is limited to the present circumstances."

In the current case, both parties want the matter settled, and quickly.

Trump's campaign declined to make anyone available for this story, but his lawyers urged the justices not to delay.

"The Court should put a swift and decisive end to these ballot-disqualification efforts, which threaten to disenfranchise tens of millions of Americans and which promise to unleash chaos and bedlam if other state courts and state officials follow Colorado's lead and exclude the likely Republican presidential nominee from their ballots," Trump's lawyers wrote.

House GOP announces bill providing more military aid to Israel but leaves out Ukraine

WASHINGTON (AP)—House Republicans will move forward with a $17.6 billion package next week that provides military aid to Israel and replenish U.S. weapons, but leaves out more help for Ukraine, underscoring the challenges facing supporters of a comprehensive national security package that would also include billions of dollars for immigration enforcement.

The move gives Speaker Mike Johnson and House Republicans the chance to show support for Israel even though there is little chance the Senate will go along. Meanwhile, text of a broader Senate compromise is expected to be released this weekend and a key test vote on that package will be held during the week.

Johnson said that Senate leadership is aware that by failing to include the House in their negotiations, they have eliminated the ability for swift consideration of any legislation.

"As I have said consistently for the past three months, the House will have to work its will on these issues and our priorities will need to be addressed," Johnson said in a letter to colleagues.

The House has already approved a nearly $14.5 billion military aid package in November for Israel that the Senate declined to take up. Republicans also insisted it be paid for with cuts elsewhere. The bill targeted the Internal Revenue Service for cuts, though the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said doing so would end up costing the federal government a net $12.5 billion because of lost revenue from tax collections.

The tactic of including IRS cuts also turned it into a more partisan, 226-196 vote. Johnson said in his letter to colleagues that removing the offsets should allow for swift passage of the Israel aid.

"During debate in the House and in numerous subsequent statements, Democrats made clear that their primary objection to the original House bill was with its offsets," Johnson said. "The Senate will no longer have excuses, however misguided, against swift passage of this critical support for our ally."

Rep. Ken Calvert, R-Calif., released the text of the military assistance bill for Israel. It would provide $4 billion to replenish missile defense systems and $1.2 billion to counter short-range rockets and mortar threats. There's also funding for the procurement of advanced weapons system and to enhance the production of artillery and other munitions.

To ensure the support does not compromise U.S. readiness, it includes $4.4 billion to replenish U.S. stocks of weapons provided to Israel. There's also $3.3 billion for current U.S. military operations in the region.

World

Israel issues most detailed warning yet to Hezbollah

AP

A woman visits a display of posters of people taken hostage by Hamas on Oct. 7, 2023, during a weekly rally calling for their release, in Tel Aviv, Israel, Saturday, Feb. 3, 2024.

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP)—Israel's military on Saturday issued its most detailed warning yet to Hezbollah in neighboring Lebanon that it would be "ready to attack immediately" if provoked, as it recounted its actions along the northern border during four months of war in Gaza and made a rare acknowledgement of dozens of airstrikes inside Syria against the militant group.

"We do not choose war as our first priority, but we are certainly prepared," military spokesperson Daniel Hagari said, adding: "We will continue to act wherever Hezbollah is present, we will continue to act wherever it is required in the Middle East. What is true for Lebanon is true for Syria, and is true for other more distant places."

The comments followed the defense minister's warning that a cease-fire in Gaza against the militant group Hamas wouldn't mean Israel wouldn't attack Hezbollah as needed.

Efforts to close wide gaps between Israel and Hamas in pursuit of a cease-fire continued in the region where concerns about a wider war with Iran-allied groups remain. A top Hamas official, Osama Hamdan, said they were studying the proposal put forward by the U.S., Egypt, Qatar and Israel but insist on Israel accepting conditions including a permanent cease-fire.

The war in Hamas-run Gaza has leveled vast swaths of the tiny besieged enclave, displaced 85% of its population and pushed a quarter of residents to starvation. The Health Ministry in Gaza said Saturday that 107 people were killed over the past 24 hours, bringing the wartime total to 27,238. More than 66,000 people have been wounded.

In Gaza's southernmost town of Rafah, at least 17 people including women and children were killed in two separate airstrikes overnight, according to the registration office at Abu Yousef al-Najjar hospital where the bodies were taken.

The first strike hit a residential building east of Rafah, killing at least 13 people from a single family. Four women and three children were among the dead, hospital officials said.

"Two children are still under the rubble, and we don't, still we don't know anything about them," relative Ahmad Hijazi said. The second strike hit a house in Rafah's Jeneina area, killing at least two men and two women.

US, Britain strike Yemen's Houthis in new wave, retaliating for attacks by Iran-backed militants

WASHINGTON (AP)—The United States and Britain struck 36 Houthi targets in Yemen on Saturday in a second wave of assaults meant to further disable Iran-backed groups that have relentlessly attacked American and international interests in the wake of the Israel-Hamas war. But Washington once more did not directly target Iran as it tries to find a balance between a forceful response and intensifying the conflict.

The latest strikes against the Houthis were launched by U.S. warships and American and British fighter jets. The strikes follow an air assault in Iraq and Syria on Friday that targeted other Iranian-backed militias and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard in retaliation for the drone strike that killed three U.S. troops in Jordan last weekend.

The Houthi targets were in 13 different locations and were struck by U.S. F/A-18 fighter jets from the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower aircraft carrier, by British Typhoon FGR4 fighter aircraft and by the Navy destroyers USS Gravely and the USS Carney firing Tomahawk missiles from the Red Sea, according to U.S. officials and the U.K. Defense Ministry. The U.S. officials were not authorized to publicly discuss the military operation and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The U.S. warned that its response after the soldiers' deaths at the Tower 22 base in Jordan last Sunday would not be limited to one night, one target or one group. While there has been no suggestion the Houthis were directly responsible, they have been one of the prime U.S. adversaries since Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7, killing more than 1,200 people and taking about 250 hostages. The Health Ministry in Hamas-ruled Gaza said that more than 26,000 people have been killed and more than 64,400 wounded in the Israeli military operation since the war began.

Health & Wellness

The US eliminated measles in 2000. Why is it back now?

By ANGELA ROBERTS
The Baltimore Sun

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is urging health care providers to be "on alert" for patients with symptoms of measles—a virus declared eliminated in the U.S. in 2000—after nearly two dozen cases have been reported across the country in the past month.

Between Dec. 1 and Jan. 23, the CDC has been notified of 23 measles cases, including seven "direct importations" by international travelers and two outbreaks with more than five cases each, according to a letter the federal agency sent to clinicians last week.

Most of the cases were among children and teenagers who had not been vaccinated against the virus, and nine of them were reported by the health department in Philadelphia—a city a two-hour drive from Baltimore. Additionally, the Virginia Department of Health notified people earlier this month that they may have been exposed to measles if they were at Dulles International Airport on Jan. 3 or at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport on Jan. 4.

The outbreak may be scary, said Dr. Theresa Nguyen—chair of pediatrics at the Greater Baltimore Medical Center in Towson—but it's important for parents not to panic.

Instead, she said, "the message is, 'Get your children vaccinated.'"

The measles vaccine used today—which also protects people against mumps and rubella—was approved by the Food and Drug Administration more than 50 years ago. But the nationwide MMR vaccination rate has fallen by two percentage points over the past two school years, after sitting firmly at 95% for 10 years. In Maryland, the child vaccine exemption rate increased by 0.4 percentage points from the 2021-22 school year to the 2022-23 school year.

DAVID MCNEW

Incoming kindergartener Jeremy Conner, 5, reacts to a Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccination as his father Mark Conner tries to comfort him Aug. 26, 2002, in Santa Ana, California.

Measles, a very contagious, viral illness characterized by a cough, runny nose and pinkeye, hasn't been endemic in the U.S. in more than 20 years. But in 1998, the progress made in convincing parents to vaccinate their children was jeopardized by the publication of a flimsy study that suggested getting the MMR vaccine may predispose a child to developing autism.

The journal that published the study has since retracted it, and Andrew Wakefield—the paper's lead author—is now barred from practicing as a physician in the United Kingdom. But the vaccine hesitancy seeded by his research persists today, Nguyen said. And since the coronavirus pandemic, vaccine hesitancy has only grown, she added.

Nguyen recently sent a letter of her own to GBMC's pediatricians, asking them to be aware of the increase in cases and to add measles to the list of viruses that may explain a child's fever or cough.

It also needs to be easy for families to vaccinate their children, said Dr. Esther Liu, chair of the department of pediatrics at the University of Maryland Baltimore Washington Medical Center in Glen Burnie.

The hospital's community outreach program is working with a local elementary school to help parents ensure that their children are caught up on their vaccines before an outbreak begins, Liu said.

The CDC recommends that all children get two doses of MMR vaccine. Children should receive the first dose when they're 12 to 15 months old and the second dose when they're 4 to 6 years old.

However, Liu said, it's important for parents to know that their child can be vaccinated when they're as early as 6 months old if they are planning to travel to a country where measles is common, their child has been exposed to the virus, or there is an outbreak nearby.

For parents who are nervous about vaccines, Liu recommended that they check out healthychildren.org—a parenting website run by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Weight-loss medications alone are not a quick fix

By DEEDEE STIEPAN
Mayo Clinic News Network

One of the most common New Year's resolutions is to lose weight. Many may be wondering if weight-loss medications can help them reach their goal. Medications called semaglutides—better known by the brand names Ozempic and Wegovy—have been shown to help people lose about 15% of their body weight. But as Dr. Andres Acosta explains in this Mayo Clinic Minute, these medications alone are not a quick solution.

"What we need to know about taking any intervention for obesity, including these two new medications, is that they're not a quick fix. They're not a magic pill or, in this case, a magic injection," says Dr. Acosta, a Mayo Clinic expert in treating obesity and co-author of "The Mayo Clinic Diet Rx."

He says in order to achieve healthy, long-term weight loss, tools like weight-loss medications need to be part of a multidisciplinary program that includes diet and exercise routines.

"The diet is still key. What this medication is doing is suppressing our appetite, so I don't feel that hungry, so I can eat less. So, diet is important," says Dr. Acosta.

Dr. Acosta recommends sticking to a healthy, low-calorie, high-protein diet to ensure healthy weight loss.

"When the medications or effects are coming off, or we want to stop the medications, it's important that we consider what diet intervention I'm going to do—what changes I'm going to do to my lifestyle, to my diet, in my exercising, my physical activity—in order to keep that weight off for a longer period of time."

MAYO CLINIC MINUTE

Can honey help with coughs?

By DEB BALZER
Mayo Clinic News Network

Coughs due to respiratory infections such as colds are common this time of year. An effective treatment for a disruptive cough might be sitting in your kitchen pantry.

Dr. Angela Mattke, a pediatrician with Mayo Clinic Children's Center, says honey can help soothe coughs for adults and children. But, she says, never give honey to a child under 1.

A spoonful of sugar might help the medicine go down, but the medicine is honey, in this case.

"Honey is safe for anyone ages 1 and above. And it's been shown to be effective and safe for both children and adults," says Dr. Mattke.

Adding honey to warm water or tea, or just a spoonful of honey itself can help with coughs.

"It has been shown to be more effective than over-the-counter cough medications," she says.

Honey helps by soothing the throat and coating cough receptors. Here are her recommendations for children over age 1.

"You can start with half a teaspoon to a teaspoon, some type of warm liquid. As they get older and they're able to more easily swallow the honey, you can just give it to them directly on a teaspoon," Dr. Mattke says.

She recommends using a teaspoon every two hours. And this dosage applies equally to adults.

"And if you do choose to give honey for cough suppression, we would recommend that you use pasteurized honey," adds Dr. Mattke.

Honey and babies

Honey is generally safe for adults and children over the age of 1. Avoid giving honey, even in small amounts, to infants under the age of 1. Honey may lead to a rare but serious gastrointestinal condition known as infant botulism, triggered by exposure to *Clostridium botulinum* spores. The bacteria from these spores can thrive and multiply in a baby's intestines, producing a potentially harmful toxin.

Promising news about cheese

ON NUTRITION

BY BARBARA INTERMILL
Tribune News Service

Barbara Intermill is a registered dietitian nutritionist and syndicated columnist. She is the author of Quinn-Essential Nutrition: The Uncomplicated Science of Eating. *Email her at barbara@quinnessentialnutrition.com.*

The Wisconsin license plate on a car that passed me on the highway said it all: "Say Chzzzz." I smiled.

More than 180 years ago, Wisconsin farmers began making cheese to preserve excess milk from their cows (wisconsincheese.com). Today, according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Wisconsin is the top cheese-producing state, followed by California, Idaho and New Mexico.

New Mexico? I'm a native of this state, so I do know that cheese is a staple in many New Mexican dishes. Queso blanco, for example, is a soft crumbly white cheese often melted into sauces to top enchiladas or crumbled over beans, tacos or huevos rancheros ("wey-vose ran-chair-ohs")—a popular breakfast dish.

Other cheeses inspired by Spanish-speaking cultures include Queso Para Freir (translated "cheese that is fried")—a favorite in the Caribean and Central America. This mild-tasting cheese is also used in sandwiches and baked dishes, according to Goya Foods, the largest, Hispanic-owned food company in the United States.

How does this culturally diverse food fit into a healthful diet? Cheese is in the dairy group—one of six core elements that make up a healthful dietary pattern, according to the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. And while this report generally recommends lower fat versions, some intriguing research suggests that traditional cheeses may also be reasonable choices.

Natural cheese is a fermented food made with milk, salt, probiotices (aka "good bacteria") and rennet, an enzyme that causes milk protein to form curds. A 2022 review in the journal Microorganisms (https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2607/10/6/1151) includes cheese as a traditional fermented food.

DREAMSTIME

Today, according to the United States Department of Agriculture, Wisconsin is the top cheese-producing state, followed by California, Idaho and New Mexico.

Studies from around the world, say these authors, have revealed strong associations between fermented foods and reduced risk of heart disease, diabetes as well as a lower risk of death.

Cheese is also a significant source of saturated fat which we are called to limit in our diets. Evidence is emerging, however, that we may need to judge the saturated fat in foods by the company they keep.

For example, a 2022 research article in The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition reported that a higher intake of saturated fat from dairy foods had less of an impact on heart disease than a lower intake of these foods, especially in males. And while not statistically significant, the same intake of saturated fats from non-dairy foods did not have the same favorable outcomes.

How can this be? We don't know for sure, but some research suggests the mix of calcium and other nutrients in cheese may reduce how much fat we absorb from these foods, says the National Dairy Council, a non-profit dairy nutrition research and education organization.

At any rate, remember that a serving of natural cheese is about 1 1/2 ounces or 1/3 cup shredded. As always, moderation is key.

Life & Style

Japan wants everyone to know: Taylor Swift will make it in time for the Super Bowl

TOKYO (AP)—Taylor Swift, who is holding concerts in Japan through Feb. 10, will make it in time for the Super Bowl to see her partner and football superstar Travis Kelce play.

To make sure all her fans know, the Japanese Embassy in Washington, D.C. has sent a message on X, formerly Twitter, alluding to her hit songs in bold letters.

Swift

"Despite the 12-hour flight and 17-hour time difference, the Embassy can confidently Speak Now to say that if she departs Tokyo in the evening after her concert, she should comfortably arrive in Las Vegas before the Super Bowl begins," it said.

Swift is in a highly public relationship with Kansas City Chiefs tight end Kelce. The AFC champions face off the San Francisco 49ers, the NFC champs, Feb. 11.

Noise regulations in Tokyo stipulate that events must stop using the public sound system at 9:30 p.m. That should give Swift plenty of time, given that Japan is a day ahead in the global day.

Swift is performing four nights at the Tokyo Dome as part of her Eras Tour, which continues later in Australia. That means she would have to fly halfway around the world again later in the week.

Swift's flying on a private jet to watch Kelce play has already prompted criticism about carbon emissions and lavish spending.

Hasty Pudding honors 'Saltburn' actor Barry Keoghan as its Man of the Year

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (AP)—Harvard University's Hasty Pudding Theatricals roasted Barry Keoghan, best known for his roles in "Dunkirk," "The Killing of a Sacred Deer," "Eternals," and "The Banshees of Inisherin," on Friday with its 2024 Man of the Year Award.

Keoghan, who also starred in the comedy psychological thriller "Saltburn" and the World War II drama series "Masters of The Air," was presented with a pudding pot before being invited to attend a performance of Hasty Pudding's 175th production "Heist Heist Baby!"

During the roast, Keoghan, who is Irish, was pressed into a boxing match with "Mr. Irish Potato Famine," played by an actor in a comically oversized suit and hat. He also participated in an awkward romantic comedy scene at the end of which he planted his face in a dish of spaghetti.

Keoghan, who acted in "The Eternals" about a race of immortal beings, confessed during the roast that his favorite Avenger was the Hulk and then changed it to Iron Man when he briefly thought Robert Downey Jr., the actor who plays Iron Man, was in the audience.

And at the end of the roast, the BAFTA award winning Keoghan was presented with a "BAFTUB" award – a bathtub-sized award that Keoghan climbed into—before being forced to don a bra adorned with cartons of Morton Salt and cardboard flames.

AP

Harvard University's Hasty Pudding Theatricals Man of the Year Barry Keoghan holds the Pudding Pot during a news conference following a roast, Friday, Feb. 2, 2024, in Cambridge, Mass.

Speaking to reporters after the roast, Keoghan said he was honored to be in the same category of the other actors who have received the award.

"I've seen Paul Newman's name and some of the others," he said. "It's just an honor isn't it?"

Keoghan joked about spending time in Harvard Square and at the prestigious university before receiving the award. "I automatically feel more intelligent being here," he said.

He also offered a quip about "Saltburn"—which includes a scene where Keoghan performs a nude dance.

"It's definitely a family movie," he said.

Annette Bening, a two-time Golden Globe winner who recently received her fifth Oscar nomination, was named Thursday as the 2024 Woman of the Year.

Hasty Pudding Theatricals, which dates to 1844 and calls itself the third-oldest theater group in the world, has handed out a Man of the Year Award since 1967. Last year's recipient was Bob Odenkirk, who reprised the role of Saul Goodman in "Better Call Saul," which earned him three Critics Choice TV awards and multiple Emmy, Golden Globe and SAG Award nominations.

Carl Weathers, who starred in 'Rocky' movies and 'The Mandalorian,' dies

NEW YORK (AP)—Carl Weathers, a former NFL linebacker who became a Hollywood action movie and comedy star, playing nemesis-turned-ally Apollo Creed in the "Rocky" movies, facing off against Arnold Schwarzenegger in "Predator" and teaching golf in "Happy Gilmore," has died. He was 76.

Weathers

Matt Luber, his manager, said Weathers died Thursday. His family issued a statement saying he died "peacefully in his sleep."

"Carl Weathers will always be a legend," Schwarzenegger wrote on Instagram. "An extraordinary athlete, a fantastic actor and a great person. We couldn't have made 'Predator' without him. And we certainly wouldn't have had such a wonderful time making it."

Comfortable flexing his muscles on the big screen in "Action Jackson" as he was joking around on the small screen in such shows as "Arrested Development," Weathers was perhaps most closely associated with Creed, who made his first appearance as the cocky, undisputed heavyweight world champion in 1976's "Rocky," starring Sylvester Stallone.

"It puts you on the map and makes your career, so to speak. But that's a one-off, so you've got to follow it up with something. Fortunately those movies kept coming, and Apollo Creed became more and more in people's consciousness and welcome in their lives, and it was just the right guy at the right time," he told The Daily Beast in 2017.

Most recently, Weathers has starred in the Disney+ hit "The Mandalorian," appearing in all three seasons.

"We lost a legend yesterday," Stallone wrote in an Instagram message that included a video tribute. The actor stood before a painting of him and Weathers boxing and said, "Carl Weathers was such an integral part of my life, my success ... I give him incredible credit and kudos.

"When he walked into that room and I saw him for the first time, I saw greatness. ... I never could have accomplished what we did with 'Rocky' without him.'"

Stallone ended his video tribute by saying: "Apollo, keep punching."

Creed, who appeared in the first four "Rocky" movies, memorably died in the ring of 1984's "Rocky IV," going toe-to-toe with the hulking, steroid-using Soviet Ivan Drago, played by Dolph Lundgren. Before he entered the ring, James Brown sang "Living in America" with showgirls and Creed popped up on a balcony in a Star-Spangled Banner shorts and waistcoat combo and an Uncle Sam hat, dancing and taunting Drago.

Reserved boyfriend may have to be shown how to love

DEAR ABBY: I am a mature, divorced woman living with my boyfriend for the past two years. We have a good life in general. We live in a nice home in a great community. My problem is, he isn't capable of showing as much affection as I need. He grew up in a family in which affection was not demonstrated physically or verbally. He claims he is the same way but will "work on it." His temporary efforts are nice, but they don't last long and things return to "business as usual." Our sex life works—in a mechanical kind of way, but there is no "lovemaking" as part of it. How do I maintain being understanding toward the situation? Should we part ways because my needs aren't being met? He's a good man, and the lack of affection is the only thing missing.

UNFULFILLED IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR UNFULFILLED: Try this: Fill your boyfriend to the brim with love and affection, and what spills over may come back to you. Communication is key. Tell him you love him—often—and be physically demonstrative. If you need affection, ASK for it. The kind of spontaneous demonstrations of affection you crave were never patterned for him during his formative years, so he will have to be taught EVERYthing. Please try it. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain if you do.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My sister and I have always had a decent relationship, but for about the last two years, we haven't communicated with each other. I recently learned that she and her husband had a baby three months ago, making me an uncle. This is their fourth child, and they just announced the child's name. What's bothering me is that I got the information through a general Facebook post. I was never contacted to be told I was about to become an uncle again. Should I be upset about this? I'm the only brother and family member left.

BATTLING EMOTIONS IN ILLINOIS

DEAR BATTLING: Much depends upon the reason you and your sister haven't been in contact in two years. Could you have had a falling out with her or her husband? Have you tried communicating with her? She may have felt slighted or that you weren't interested in a closer relationship. Because this has upset you, pick up the phone and straighten this out with your sister before you drift further apart than you already are. Half the blame for this may be yours, but you won't know for sure unless you ask.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I've got a small group of women friends I've known since childhood. One of them talks about everyone behind our backs. She's sweet and nice to our faces, but as soon as our backs are turned, she can't wait to dish the dirt. She really hurt my feelings the last time. I haven't spoken to her in almost three months, and I am stress-free! Am I being childish?

PEEVED IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR PEEVED: Childish? Not at all. Why spend time with someone you know you can't trust? In my opinion, you are being smart and self-protective.

■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren

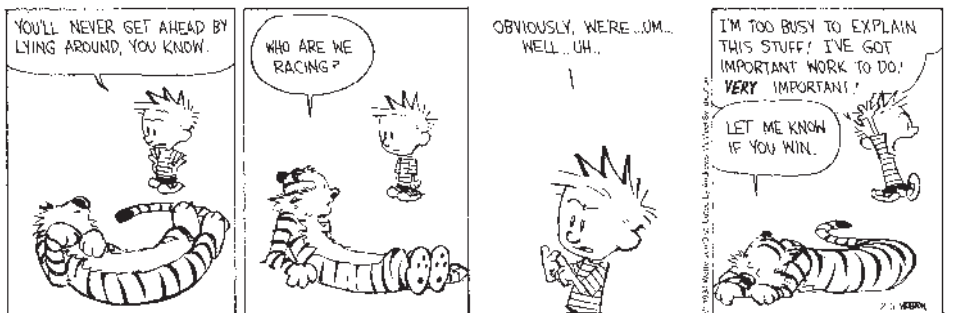
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

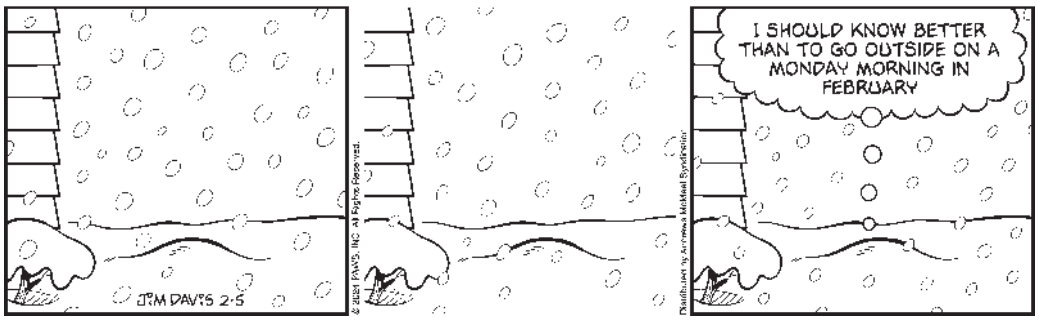
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


YOU'LL NEVER GET AHEAD BY LYING AROUND, YOU KNOW.
WHO ARE WE RACING?
OBVIOUSLY, WE'RE...UM... WELL...UH...
I'M TOO BUSY TO EXPLAIN THIS STUFF! I'VE GOT IMPORTANT WORK TO DO. VERY IMPORTANT!
LET ME KNOW IF YOU WIN.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

WHAT'S THE PLAN TODAY, DADDY-O?
IT'S A RARE WEEK, HEP CAT.
NO FREELANCE JOBS!
UH-OH.
NO, IT'S GOOD! I'M GOING TO SPEND THE WEEK "GATHERING INSPIRATION."
SO, BINGEING SHOWS AND SNACKS ON THE COUCH?
AGAIN. WE CALL IT "GATHERING INSPIRATION".
2-5

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

THAT DUMB GROUNDHOG WAS STARING AT HIS SHADOW SO LONG THAT A HAWK JUST SWOOPED DOWN AND CARRIED HIM OFF.
HA HA! HAW HA!
I WAS JUST THINKING HOW HE WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT 6 MORE WEEKS OF WINTER.
2/5

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Pickle holder
4 Purse part
9 Knock
12 Flying saucer
13 Mountain crest
14 Botanist Gray
15 Orange liqueur
17 Oahu or Kauai (Abbr.)
18 Pac. counterpart
19 Like
21 Barbie's producer
24 Painter Chagall
25 — Jima
26 Carried out
28 Sierra Nevada lake
31 Type choice
33 Tofu source
35 Belgrade resident
36 Aviator
38 Cooking fuel
40 Corp. boss
41 Retain
43 Suppose
45 "Beats me!"
47 "CSI" find
48 Apply cream
49 University in Lubbock
54 CBS logo
55 Pedro's pal
56 Brit's restroom
57 Request
58 Crowbar
59 Boating hazard

DOWN
1 Protrude
2 Nigeria's cont.
3 King, in Cannes
4 Like most pretzels
5 Vine-supporting frame
6 Scale members
7 Top players
8 Eat like a chicken
9 Do-over coupon
10 Celeb's aide
11 — Alto, CA
16 Bit of butter
20 401(k) relatives
21 Peeve
22 Military no-show
23 Wisconsin-born Yankee shortstop and Hall-of-Famer
27 Pooch
29 Layered cookie
30 Black, in verse
32 Prom attendee
34 Football stat
37 Tourist's car
39 Motion detector, e.g.
42 Lancome fragrance
44 Manx, for one
45 Inventor's inspiration
46 Calendar squares
50 VII doubled
51 Sprite
52 Bill's partner
53 Glutton

Solution time: 21 mins.

C	P	A		G	M	A		M	I	N	E	D
L	A	D		O	Y	L		O	R	O	N	O
A	T	O		W	H	A	T	N	E	R	V	E
R	I	P		N	E	M	E	A				
K	O	I	O		H	O	E		S	H	A	D
			H	B	O		N	E	W	A	G	E
O	M	E	G	A			L	A	G	O	S	
L	E	G	E	N	D		S	K	Y			
E	D	G	E		C	S	T		S	A	G	S
				A	L	T	A	R		T	L	C
S	O	F	T	S	E	R	V	E		L	A	O
I	R	A	S	H		E	E	E		A	Z	I
P	A	Y	F	F		P	D	F		S	F	T

Last Friday's Answer

1	2	3	■	4	5	6	7	8	■	9	10	11
12			■	13					■	14		
15			16						■	17		
			18			■	19		20			
21	22	23				■	24				■	■
25			■	26		27	■	28			29	30
31			32	■	33		34	■	35			
36				37	■	38		39	■	40		
		41			42	■	43		44			
45	46					■	47			■	■	■
48			■	49		50				51	52	53
54			■	55					■	56		
57			■	58					■	59		

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Darren Criss, 37; Michael Sheen, 55; Jennifer Jason Leigh, 62; Barbara Hershey, 76.

Happy Birthday: Put more thought into how you spend your time and the benefits and disadvantages you encounter from your daily routine. Be innovative, and you'll discover how to adjust your lifestyle to enforce the balance you require to feel happy and satisfied with how your life unfolds. Relaxing requires letting things go and fine-tuning your schedule. It's up to you to take control. Your numbers are 3, 11, 24, 29, 33, 42, 46.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19)*: Choose your associates carefully. Distance yourself from anyone pushing you to overindulge or spend money you don't have. Live a healthy lifestyle and eliminate risky activities or ventures that can lead to physical or financial loss. Research and pay attention to details before you proceed. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20)*: Simplify matters, avoid interference and pursue your dreams, hopes and wishes. Take control, and don't apologize for choosing the route that accommodates you. Don't engage in a no-win argument or take on responsibilities that don't belong to you. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20)*: Tensions will mount if you get into an emotional discussion or let someone talk you into something you can't afford or don't feel comfortable pursuing. Rethink your options and take the path that doesn't cause stress. Choose to do what makes you happy. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22)*: Nurturing meaningful relationships will lead to encouraging talks and plans that can improve your life. Consider unique ways to utilize your skills to suit the latest trends. Discipline and hard work will take time, effort and money, but the returns look positive. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22)*: Don't let what others do concern you. Keep your eye on the target that allows you to use your skills, experience and knowledge to get ahead. Approach networking functions with the intent to sell your ideas. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22)*: Put your plan in place and make it a reality. A change will boost your morale, encourage personal growth and allow you to spend more time with people who have something exciting to offer. You will accomplish plenty if you keep moving forward with optimism. ✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22)*: Make your position clear in order to avoid interference. If you waffle or let others have their way, you will end up stressed and running behind schedule. Speak up, be bold and say no to joint ventures and expenses you don't want to assume. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21)*: Avoid conversations with people looking for an argument. You'll do far better today if you put time and energy into something you can create and develop yourself. Don't let a change of plans disrupt your day. Do as you please and eliminate regret. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21)*: Get your responsibilities out of the way and move on to activities that put a smile on your face. Price out an idea before you pull out your wallet. Loss will prevail if you listen to a fast-talking sales pitch. Say no to joint ventures. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19)*: Put your time, energy and money where it counts. Focus on what brings you joy and be receptive to changes that make your life easier and more reasonable. Reach out to people who share your goals, and you can capitalize on one another's achievements. Welcome self-improvement. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18)*: The best way forward is to simplify your life by eliminating what's dragging you down. Know when to say no, and refuse to let anyone sweet talk you into something that eats up your time, offering limited return. Be bold and put yourself first. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20)*: Control your emotions, and don't buy into someone's sob story. Be a good listener and offer suggestions, but don't volunteer to do the work or pay for someone else's mistake. You have better things to do with your time. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are tenacious, inspiring and profound. You are imaginative and helpful.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

6	5	4				9		
2		9			1	6	8	
			9	6		2		4
1		6	2		4		3	
9					5	4		
3		5	8		6		9	
	6					3		9
		3			8		4	
5	2	1	3	4				8

Difficulty: ★ 2/5

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

5	6	3	4	8	2	9	1	7
4	2	7	5	1	9	3	6	8
9	1	8	6	7	3	5	2	4
6	9	4	7	5	8	1	3	2
3	7	5	1	2	6	8	4	9
1	8	2	9	3	4	6	7	5
2	4	9	8	6	1	7	5	3
7	3	6	2	9	5	4	8	1
8	5	1	3	4	7	2	9	6

Difficulty: ★★★★ 322

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

SUBWAY STATIONS **Solution: 10 letters**

E	C	U	N	D	E	R	G	R	O	U	N	D	M	S
S	S	O	M	E	T	S	Y	S	E	G	R	A	N	D
S	S	C	N	R	P	C	I	L	B	U	P	N	E	W
C	S	E	A	D	L	L	E	O	E	S	E	H	W	O
H	L	P	R	L	U	V	A	X	N	P	W	C	Y	R
E	E	C	A	P	A	C	I	T	Y	O	E	N	O	C
D	N	M	T	T	X	T	T	T	F	N	S	E	R	D
U	N	W	O	R	K	E	O	O	T	O	T	B	K	I
L	U	R	E	V	A	S	T	R	R	A	R	M	C	R
E	T	T	Ⓕ	N	E	I	A	O	S	O	E	M	I	E
D	N	Ⓐ	E	N	I	L	N	N	K	T	U	L	T	C
E	Ⓡ	T	I	S	N	A	R	T	R	Y	O	T	Y	T
Ⓔ	M	T	S	A	E	C	I	O	V	C	O	P	E	I
P	G	I	T	E	R	M	I	N	A	L	S	E	S	O
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Bench, Capacity, Central, Conductor, Crowds, Depart, Direction, East, Elevator, Enter, Escalator, Exit, Express, Fare, Grand, Line, Load, Local, London, Maps, Metro, Move, New York City, Noise, Penn, Platform, Public, Route, Schedule, Speed, Stops, System, Terminals, Time, Tokyo, Toronto, Train, Transit, Tunnels, Underground, Voice, West, Work

Last Friday's Answer: Devices

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Curry scores season-high 60 points, Warriors fall to Hawks in OT

ATLANTA (AP)—Stephen Curry scored a season-high 60 points in Golden State's 141-134 overtime loss to Atlanta on Saturday night, with Trae Young scoring 35 points to help the Hawks outlast the Warriors.

Curry had eight points in overtime to finish only two points shy of his career high of 62 at home against Portland on Jan. 3, 2021. He was 22 of 38 shots from the field, hitting 10 of 23 3-pointers, and made all six of his free throws.

Dejounte Murray scored the last seven points in an 11-0 run to open the overtime for Atlanta and finished with 19 points. Onyeka Okongwu had a career-high 22 points and a season-high 16 rebounds, and Jalen Johnson scored 21 points.

Curry scored 22 points in the fourth quarter, including a go-ahead jumper with 14 seconds remaining. Murray answered with a jumper from the free-throw line to tie it. Curry missed a last-second jumper to send it to overtime.

The Hawks have taken advantage of a six-game homestand to win four straight games, matching their best stretch of the season. They are 4-1 on the homestand.

AP

Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry wipes his face with his jersey in overtime in an NBA basketball game against the Atlanta Hawks Saturday, Feb. 3, 2024, in Atlanta.

LAKERS 113, KNICKS 105

NEW YORK (AP)—LeBron James scored 24 points and Los Angeles ended New York's winning streak at nine games.

Austin Reaves had 22 points, D'Angelo Russell and Taurean Prince each scored 16 points, and Anthony Davis finished with 12 points and 18 rebounds as the Lakers won their second straight to move above .500 (26-25).

Jalen Brunson scored 36 points to lead New York. Donte DiVincenzo had 26 before fouling out.

BUCKS 129, MAVERICKS 117

DALLAS (AP)—Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 48 points and Milwaukee overcame a 25-point deficit against Dallas for its first victory under coach Doc Rivers.

The Bucks lost their first two with Rivers on the bench after the midseason firing of first-year coach Adrian Griffin.

Rivers' first victory with the Bucks also means he and his staff will coach the Eastern Conference in the All-Star Game on Feb. 18. The Milwaukee staff gets the All-Star nod because Joe Mazzulla of East-leading Boston is ineligible after coaching in the game last year.

Damian Lillard scored 30 points in the second-biggest comeback victory this season for Milwaukee. Luka Doncic had 40 points and 11 assists for Dallas.

NETS 136, 76ERS 121

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Cam Thomas scored 40 points, Mikal Bridges had 23 and Brooklyn routed shorthanded Philadelphia.

Philadelphia was without Joel Embiid, the reigning NBA MVP who missed his second game after sustaining a left meniscus injury Tuesday night at Golden State. Philadelphia is 4-10 in the 14 games without Embiid this season.

Lonnie Walker IV added 20 points to help Brooklyn win for the third time in four games after losing 10 of 12. Former 76ers All-Star guard Ben Simmons failed to score and had nine rebounds and five assists in 14 minutes for the Nets.

Two nights after scoring a career-high 51 points at Utah, Tyrese Maxey had 23 points for Philadelphia on 8-for-23 shooting. The 76ers lost for the fifth time in six games.

CAVALIERS 117, SPURS 101

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—Donovan Mitchell scored 31 points, Evan Mobley had 28 points and 10 rebounds and Cleveland routed San Antonio.

Jarrett Allen had 26 points and 16 rebounds. and Mitchell added eight rebounds and seven assists to help Cleveland win its fifth straight and 13th in 14 games.

Mitchell and San Antonio's Zach Collins were ejected with 54.7 seconds remaining after the Cleveland All-Star leapt up to push Collins in the face and chest after taking an elbow to the head on a moving screen from the center.

Victor Wembanyama had 19 points and 14 rebounds for San Antonio. Devin Vassell scored 22 points.

KINGS 123, BULLS 115

CHICAGO (AP)—Domantas Sabonis had a triple-double and De'Aaron Fox scored 41 points, helping Sacramento hold off Chicago.

Malik Monk added 22 points as Sacramento improved to 5-1 on a seven-game trip. It has won six of seven overall, including a 133-122 victory at Indiana on Friday night.

Sabonis had 13 points, 14 rebounds and 10 assists in his 14th triple-double of the season and No. 46 for his career.

Coby White scored 26 points for depleted Chicago.

Chicago Bulls star Zach LaVine to have season-ending surgery on his right foot

CHICAGO (AP)—Chicago Bulls star Zach LaVine is going to have season-ending surgery on his right foot, creating several major questions for the franchise ahead of the NBA's trade deadline and into next year.

Following consultations with outside medical personnel, LaVine and his agency, Klutch Sports Group, made the decision in consultation with the team's training and medical staff, the Bulls announced on Saturday. The two-time All-Star is expected to have the surgery next week, and he will be out for four to six months.

"He made a decision that I think he thought was best for his health," coach Billy Donovan said. "I really feel like he did everything he could to try to get himself back to playing. I think the discomfort in his foot was at a place where I think he just didn't feel like he had any chance of being himself and really contributing, and I think that was really frustrating and hard for him."

LaVine, who turns 29 in March, missed 17 games from Nov. 30 to Jan. 3 with inflammation in his right foot. Following a slow start to the season, Chicago went 10-7 while LaVine was out.

The high-scoring guard returned Jan. 5 against Charlotte, and the Bulls responded with a stretch of five wins in seven games. But he rolled his right ankle during a 116-110 victory at Toronto on Jan. 18.

Donovan said LaVine's ankle isn't an issue anymore, but his foot wasn't responding well to treatment.

"Personally, I feel bad for him," Donovan said, "because, like I've told you guys, I know how bad he wants to play and how badly he wants to be out there, and when he can't be out there, it just bothers him."

LaVine was acquired in a June 2017 trade with Minnesota. He re-signed with the team in July 2022 for a five-year contract worth about $215 million.

He averaged 19.5 points, 5.2 rebounds and 3.9 assists in 25 games this season. He averaged at least 24.4 points and played in at least 58 games in each of the previous four years.

"It sucks for him, just because he just dealt with something not too long ago," teammate Alex Caruso said. "You feel for him. Four to six months is real surgery."

It's another tough blow for a Chicago team that has been hit hard by injuries in recent seasons. Lonzo Ball hasn't appeared in an NBA game since Jan. 14, 2022, because of a left knee injury. Patrick Williams, who was selected by the Bulls with the No. 4 pick in the 2020 draft, is out with a left foot injury.

Donovan said he didn't know the specific details surrounding LaVine's surgery. LaVine did not speak with the media on Saturday.

The timeline for his recovery means he could be limited at the beginning of next season as he ramps back up after he regains his health following the operation.

"No one's going to come save us. We still got to go out there and play games and work," Caruso said before Saturday night's 123-115 loss to Sacramento.

LaVine's injury also puts Chicago in a bad spot ahead of Thursday's NBA trade deadline. The Bulls are 23-27 after splitting their last four games.

Caruso and DeMar DeRozan likely would attract some interest if Chicago decides to tear down its roster. If it holds onto Caruso and DeRozan, it could bring in some help to ease the heavy load on its guards that increased with the injuries to LaVine and others.

"Whatever they decide to do is kind of their decision," Caruso said. "My job as an employee of this team is to show up and do my duty, and that's to go out and play basketball every night."

Waiting game continues for 76ers on Joel Embiid's injury status

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—The long-term status of Philadelphia 76ers center Joel Embiid remained up in the air on Saturday night as the defending NBA MVP and team officials continued to wait for potential options to deal with a meniscus injury suffered on Tuesday at Golden State.

"Nope, we're just still waiting," Sixers head coach Nick Nurse said when asked for an Embiid update during his pre-game press conference Saturday before Philadelphia's game against the Brooklyn Nets.

The team confirmed in a statement to reporters on Thursday that Embiid suffered a lateral meniscus injury after Warriors forward Jonathan Kuminga fell on his leg during the fourth quarter of Golden State's 119-107 win. The report continued by saying that Embiid would miss Philadelphia's game on Saturday against Brooklyn and would be reevaluated by doctors and team officials to determine a rehabilitation plan for Embiid.

Embiid had missed the two previous games on the road trip with what the club called "left knee swelling," and has been listed as questionable with swelling in the knee at times since mid-December. Nurse said the club was unaware of any problems with the meniscus until Tuesday night's injury.

With Embiid out, Philadelphia will have to find a way to fill his 35.3 points per game and 11.3 rebounds. Paul Reed figures to split time at center with Mo Bamba in the meantime with the Sixers potentially making a move for a stopgap center before the Feb. 8 trade deadline. Tyrese Maxey is likely to become the center of Philadelphia's offensive attack until Embiid returns.

"We continue to see different things each night that takes a different look to see how much we can use Paul and how much we can get out of Mo," Nurse said. "Paul is a hustle, put back guy and Mo is a caretaker of the ball on offense going side to side and blocking shots. They have to cover the 48 minutes—especially for now and we believe in them."

Chiefs' Super Bowl brain trust involves former head coaches on each side of the ball

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—Patrick Mahomes remembers what Matt Nagy was like when he first arrived in Kansas City in 2017, just a fresh-faced rookie quarterback whose stardom was still very much in the future.

Nagy was the Chiefs' offensive coordinator at the time, and they spent countless hours together in meetings, practices and even on planes traveling to games.

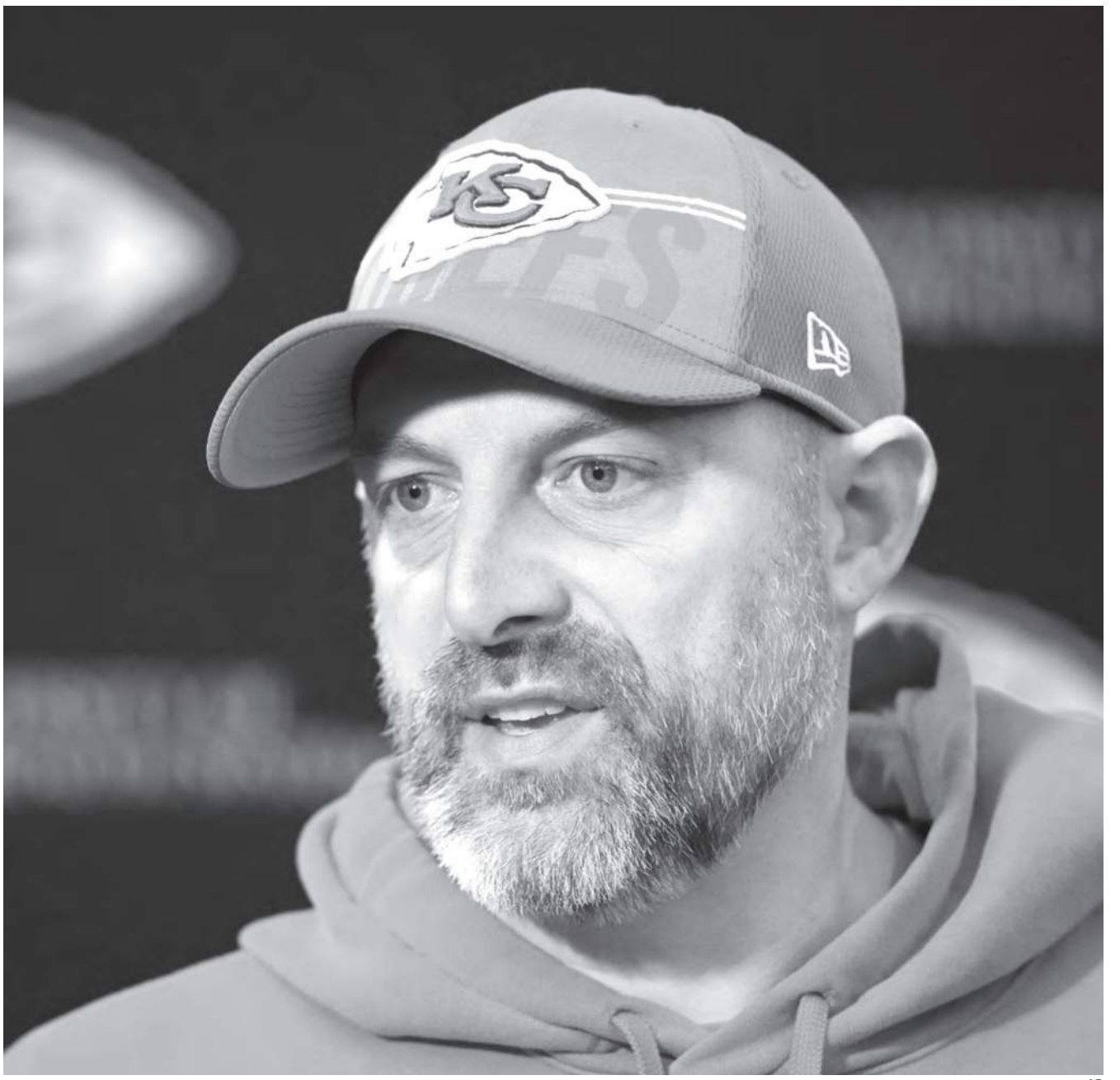
Nagy left after that season for Chicago, where he spent four years as the Bears' head coach.

But when he was fired in 2021, despite an NFC North title and two playoff appearances, Nagy returned to Kansas City and began to work with Mahomes again.

Only now, Nagy possessed the rare experience of having been an NFL head coach.

"I mean, you learn. You learn the good and the bad," Mahomes said Thursday, "and he got to be around other coaches as well, so he has different ideas he brings, and you could see that last year and you can see it this year."

Nagy was promoted back to offensive coordinator this past offseason, when Eric Bieniemy left for the same job in Washington. And that made the Chiefs exceptionally unique in that they had two ex-head coaches as coordinators.



AP

Kansas City Chiefs offensive coordinator Matt Nagy speaks to the media before the NFL football team's practice Thursday, Jan. 25, 2024, in Kansas City, Mo.

Steve Spagnuolo, who led the Rams for three seasons and was an interim coach of the Giants, has run their defense the past five years.

No other team in the NFL this past season had two former head coaches as coordinators, unless you count the Patriots and 49ers, who will face the Chiefs in the Super Bowl on Feb. 11 in Las Vegas.

New England had Bill O'Brien in charge of the offense while Bill Belichick was the de facto defensive coordinator, while San Francisco has Steve Wilks running the defensive side while coach Kyle Shanahan mostly runs the offense.

"I think what you have," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said, "is that both Nags and Spags are good leaders. And they're not afraid to make decisions. Sometimes coordinators that haven't sat in that seat are afraid to do that. Both of them do a nice job with that.

"They've done a very good job with it, actually."

The Chiefs' offense has gone through fits and starts this season, but it has peaked at just the right time, helping them to beat Miami, Buffalo and Baltimore on the way back to the Super Bowl.

Their defense has been spectacular the entire way, though, ranking second in total defense while helping to keep Kansas City afloat as its offense tried to find its way.

"We really believe in our leaders, Spags and the coaches he has in place," Chiefs linebacker Drue Tranquill said. "There are times in football, whether it's high school or college or the professional level, where you're just not sure about the game plan, and that hasn't happened this year. When we go into a game, we're like, 'This is going to work.'"

The situation in Kansas City is hardly unprecedented; the Steelers had former Chiefs coach Todd Haley running their offense and former Bengals coach Dick LeBeau their defense from 2012-14. But it is rare, and in a lot of ways a luxury.

Reid knows that whenever Nagy or Spagnuolo offer their opinions, they come with the knowledge of having been in his shoes.

"I'd change a lot of what happened of wishing we had won more, and could've done more," Nagy admitted not long ago, when asked to reflect on a 34-31 record but an 0-2 playoff mark in Chicago.

"But I learned a lot and that part I wouldn't change. I think I got to be able to self-reflect on where I went wrong and how I could've been better."

He's taken that experience back to Kansas City, and it has been evident in the conviction he has had running the offense. A good example came during the AFC title game, when the Chiefs were trying to preserve their lead and run out the clock.

"He makes me do a little sheet where I pick plays for certain situations," Mahomes explained, "and he went right to it, the play he gave to me. We were comfortable with it, went out and executed the play. Stuff like that is important.

"He had success as a head coach," Mahomes continued, "and he had some times where he didn't have as much success. But he learned from those times and he came back, and I think he's been a better coach because of that. That's what you have to do in this league, playing or coaching or whatever it is. You learn from your success and you learn from the things that you don't do so well, and you try to be better the next opportunity that you get."

Mahomes and Purdy chasing greatness and the greatest in Tom Brady and Joe Montana

Patrick Mahomes is chasing Tom Brady. Brock Purdy is playing in the shadow of Joe Montana.

Winning the Super Bowl would be another major step for either quarterback.

Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs seek to become the first team in 19 years to win back-to-back Super Bowls when they take on Purdy and the San Francisco 49ers in Las Vegas on Feb. 11.

For Mahomes, it's an opportunity to win his third NFL championship in his sixth full season as a starter at age 28. Brady won his third of seven Super Bowl rings in his fourth season as a starter at age 27.

For Purdy, it's a chance to complete his journey from being the last player selected in the 2022 draft to leading a storied franchise to a record-tying sixth Super Bowl title. Only the Patriots and Steelers have won six.

If Mahomes is going to make a run at Brady's record, he has to win this one. These opportunities are rare.

The Chiefs had a difficult path to get to this point and had to go on the road twice in the playoffs for the first time in the Mahomes' era. There's a reason why no team has repeated since Brady led New England to two Super Bowl victories in a row in the 2003-04 seasons.

A third title in five years would solidify Kansas City's claim to a dynasty. The Patriots won three in four years in the 2000s and they won three in five years in the 2010s.

"I think in dynasties, I always say you've got to win three," Mahomes said before the season. "Our job is to do whatever we can to win as many as we can, not have any regrets when we step off the field. I think if we keep the mentality we have, we can look back at the end of our career (and) then we can decide if we're a dynasty or not."

The Chiefs realize they have a unique talent in Mahomes, already a certainty for the Pro Football Hall of Fame. The two-time NFL and Super Bowl MVP has built an impressive resume and is working toward being in the GOAT conversation.

"We see it every day, we don't take that for granted," coach Andy Reid said. "We respect the job that he does, and we appreciate it. We know we're seeing something special, and he's still young in this business. That's a great thing for the Chiefs, it's a great thing for the city. It's somebody you can build around and (general manager) Brett Veach does a great job with that of making sure that other positions are relative to that. It's a positive thing that we're very aware of is the best way I can say it."

If Purdy wins, he'll stamp his own identity in San Francisco, where Montana led the 49ers to four championships in the 1980s and fellow Pro Football Hall of Famer, Steve Young, helped them win their fifth title 29 years ago.

Purdy rose from being "Mr. Irrelevant" to replace Jimmy Garoppolo and Trey Lance and won his first seven career starts, including two playoff games. But he suffered a significant elbow injury in the first quarter of San Francisco's loss at Philadelphia in the NFC championship game last year.

Purdy returned from surgery to start the season opener and was outstanding, becoming a finalist for the AP NFL MVP award. He led the NFL with a 113 passer rating and his 9.6 yards per attempt were the most in the NFL for a qualifying QB since Kurt Warner had 9.9 in 2000. Purdy was the first Niners quarterback in more than 20 years to throw for more than 4,000 yards (4,280) or at least 30 TDs (31).

He's helped the 49ers advance with a pair of comeback wins in the playoffs, showing off some of those "Joe Cool" qualities in the clutch that made Montana one of the all-time greatest winners.

And this week, Purdy, the AP has learned, signed a major deal with Toyota to be a national partner and brand ambassador, becoming the first active player the company has partnered with since signing a partnership with the NFL in October 2023.

All he needs now is a Super Bowl MVP trophy. He'd be happy with just a win.

"What a challenge. You've got Mahomes, what he does, their team, they're special," Purdy said. "They're winners. They've proven that over however many years he's been there. For us to go back and play them is going to be sweet, going to be special for all of us. I wasn't here obviously in '19. You could just tell the guys that have been here, like, anybody, it would be special for them to play these guys. I'm excited to be a part of it." ***(AP)***

Wahoo in the Marianas set for March 23

A fishing derby held for the students, by the students is back with the 5th Annual Wahoo in the Marianas set for March 23, 2024 from 6am to 5pm at the Smiling Cove Marina.

Prizes are as follows: $2,000 for first place, $1,500 for second place, $1,000 for third place, and $500 for total weight (total weight of your three heaviest non-placing wahoo). Planning for additional prizes and a student raffle the day of the derby are ongoing, please follow Tasi To Table on Facebook and Instagram @Tasi To Table to get the latest updates on the Wahoo in the Marianas!

Registration will take place the day before, March 22, from 4pm to 6pm at the Smiling Cove Marina. Fees are $200 per boat consisting of one (1) captain and two (2) anglers, and $30 for each additional angler.

AP
MARK RABAGO

MV *Gloria II* captain John T. Sablan and his crew pose with their prizewinning catch after topping Tasi To Table's 4th Annual Wahoo in the Marianas Fishing Tournament last year.

For any questions related to the derby, please contact event chair Jeen Sablan at sablan.jeendaniel@mycnmipss.org, event co-chair Brayden Haruzi at haruzi.brayden@mycnmipss.org, or the Tasi To Table office at 670-234-8274 (TASI).

The Wahoo in the Marianas is an annual fishing derby from the youth fishing nonprofit organization Tasi To Table. This derby is led and organized by TTT's student members, and revenue generated from the derby will go toward TTT's eight-month student program.

Last year, captain John T. Sablan and the MV *Gloria II* reclaimed their lofty place in local fishing lore after topping Tasi To Table's 4th Annual Wahoo in the Marianas Fishing Tournament.

Sablan said even though they won with a 29.2-lb catch, the wahoo they caught before noon in the waters off the Kingfisher Golf Links is actually a minnow compared to ones they usually catch.

He said MV *Gloria II* actually is the record-holder of the heaviest wahoo ever when they reeled in a whopping 54-lb wahoo in 2008 during the Saipan International Fishing Tournament. ***(PR)***

CNMI Weightlifting meeting on Feb. 10

CNMI Weightlifting will hold a meeting to discuss the upcoming Micronesian Games this coming Saturday, Feb. 10, 10am at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium conference room.

The 2024 Micronesian Games is currently scheduled to be held in the Marshalls Islands from June 15 to 24, 2024. All athletes interested in competing in the Micronesian Games are requested to attend this meeting. Participants must be at least 15 years old on or before Dec. 31, 2024 to represent the CNMI.

For additional information, contact John Davis by email at cnmiweightlifting@gmail.com. ***(PR)***

Epstein to return to Red Sox as adviser and part-owner of Fenway Sports Group

BOSTON (AP)—Theo Epstein, the architect of two World Series championships with the Red Sox, is returning to the organization as a minority owner and part-time senior adviser to its parent company, Fenway Sports Group.

The Brookline, Massachusetts, native, who also helped the Chicago Cubs win the 2016 title—their first in 108 years—will advise the sports and entertainment conglomerate on operations and investment strategy.

"This is truly a unique opportunity for me—a chance to partner with people who mean a lot to me; a chance to challenge myself in new arenas; and a chance to use my experience and perspective to help others succeed and win at the highest level," Epstein said in a statement. "The special connection I feel toward this organization and the ownership group has stayed with me through the years."

Fenway Sports Group owns the Red Sox, the Pittsburgh Penguins, Liverpool of the English Premier League and NASCAR's RFK Racing, and it announced this week that it is making a major investment in the PGA Tour. In his new role, Epstein said he will be "asking questions, offering opinions, building trust, and supporting the terrific people at FSG to help us reach new heights."

Epstein, 50, will be stepping down as a consultant to Major League Baseball, where he worked on rule changes designed to add more excitement to the game. He will remain an operating partner for Arctos Partners, a private equity group that has a stake in FSG.

The move is subject to league approval.

GOLD

From page 20

the lightest in the four-man matchup at 97 kg, while his opponents were at 108 kg and up. He won his first match against Federated States of Micronesia's Joseph Reginalt via a bread cutter choke three minutes into the round.

After years of hiatus from competing, Agda said his first match back on the mat "felt super great! Missed that feeling of competing in front of a crowd!" As for how he felt about getting silver, he said he was content. "Being the lightest in that division, I really put myself to the test and battled it out."

Agda last competed as a white belt in the Asian Open Japan in 2018 where he won bronze. He went back to training jiu jitsu consistently again last November after three and a half years off.

He said getting back into shape is what made him want to compete again, and "at the age I am in right now, is the best time to be competing and making the most out of my athletic lifestyle! I've always been a competitor, always up for a challenge. I only had two months of prep for this comp but I trained meticulously hard day in and day out."

His next goal is to compete as much as possible this year just as long as he's injury free. He is looking forward to the Marianas Pro in Manila this April 20.

He then thanked his team and training partners at Trench Tech and Latte Built, and his sponsors Skydive Saipan and Micronesian Air Cargo Services for making his trip possible. He also thanked his friends and family for their love and support.

For Kitami's part, he said he's trained for a long time for the event with his good friend Jacob Yamagishi. They trained in his garage every night after work because they wanted to see what they could do in a different level of competition. He said winning the gold, "I feel great and all the hard work paid off."

In the competition, Kitami said he was nervous at first, "but with the help of my coaches helping me with confidence, it helped me a lot throughout my matches."

Kitami has been in the sport of jiu-jitsu since he was a junior in high school and as for what's next, he said they'll be back in the garage and learning new techniques.

He thanked his friends, family, and Baret Submissions coaches Bryan Deleon Guerrero and Roman Cruz for helping him train. "It was an honor to represent Baret Submissions and take home gold," said Kitami.

Two others from the CNMI—Isaiah Sablan and Jacob Yamagishi—joined Kitami and Agda in the competition and also brought home medals in their respective divisions. Results of those matches will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune.*

SINAPALO

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national School I, 21-7.

The Colts include Makoa Mendiola, Kailana Diaz-King, Francisco Moses, Randall Barcinas, Audreanna Barcinas, Manuel Cruz Jr., Milena Cepeda, Josie Torres, Marthonia Erickson, Miran Tamang, Trayvan Manglona, Tristan Manglona, and Joaquin Adriano.

In other results, Koblerville Elementary School I beat Oleai Elementary School II, 21-9; OES I edged Sinapalo II, 21-17; San Vicente Elementary School II won a close one against William S. Reyes Elementary School II, 22-20; GTC 2 overcame SIS I, 21-18; WSR II trumped Sinapalo I, 21-14; OES I outscored SIS I, 21-5; KobES I shot down GCA, 21-10; OES II outplayed SVES II, 21-12; WSR II outlasted GCA, 21-9; and KobES I defeated Sinapalo 1, 21-11.

On Week 1 last Jan. 26, Kagman Elementary School won three games; GES II, SIS II, WSR I, and SVES I won two games each; and Saipan Community School I and KobES 2 won one game apiece.

Week 3 is set for next Friday, Feb. 16 with games from 4:45pm to 6:45pm at the Oleai Sports Complex.

TNB

From page 20

the championship.

TNB was down one man with Jack Lizama out due to an injury, but Coby Santos, Preston Basa, and Douglas Schmidt kept the shots coming to outscore Net Rippers' Greg Sablan, Jeffrey Castro, and Jack Aranda.

With time left to spare, TNB reached 21 points after a barrage of 2-pointers from Santos and Schmidt sealed the win.

Team Glaziers' Jan Travilla, Kaia Travilla, Madi Alegre, and Miki Kautz outplayed Antonette Labausa, Connie Camacho, Kina Rangamar, and Irish Pagarao in all three games—13-10, 8-4, and 9-6.

TNB's Basa after their finals game said that they just continued with their strategy of scoring. Their inside man Lizama was out due to injury, so they relied on outside shots, which was a quick strategy to 21 points.

As for the chance of representing the CNMI in the upcoming FIBA Asia 3x3 Cup in Singapore this March, Basa said, "We're all part of the national program so we're staying fit. We've discussed getting together more and really practicing more of the three-on-three concept because it's very different from five-on-five."

If they get the green light on representing the CNMI in Singapore, Basa said they might sit Lizama down in the last 3x3 games this month. The pool for CNMI is out already, with the men's division in Draw B that's made up of the Republic of Korea, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka.

Basa, on his thoughts of the draw, said they're looking forward to it. "We're excited. It's gonna be tough. Those are all countries we've never played. We're so used to playing just the Micronesian Islands, but we're excited. We want to go and gain experience and bring back whatever we can to pass down to the youth or members of the national program."

In the men's division, TNB leads in the points system with 190 points; Net Rippers is second with 130 points; third is Hagu Real Hoops at 80; La Mesa Kusina (Eats Easy) and Shots Fired are at 60 points each; Team Elite is at 50; Risers and Tupu Kingz are tied with 40 points; K2 Ballers and Team Priority Care have 30 points each; Toka has 20 points; and Socho, Brawlers, 10-7, Scorgasm, Tuntunizers, and Kag-Bros are at 10 points each.

Team Glaziers lead the women's division with 180 points; second is The Angry Penne (Alley-Oopsie Daisies) with 130 points; Swish Kebabs is third at 70 points; Teine Aerto is at 30; and Dunkin' Donuts are at 20 points.

The last matchup in the series is set for Thursday, Feb. 22, and Saturday, Feb. 24, with the champions going to the FIBA Asia 3x3 Cup in Singapore to be finalized.

LEIGH GASES

From left, Trail Glaziers' Jan Travilla, Kaia Travilla, Mikki Kautz, and Madi Alegre won the NMIBF Marianas Arsenal 3x3 Basketball Series last Tuesday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Curry scores season-high 60 points, Warriors fall to Hawks in OT.

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Wahoo in the Marianas set for March 23.

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Gold for Kitami, silver for Agda's return to Jiu-Jitsu

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

From the ocean to the mat, Masaki Kitami continues to reel in the big ones as he brought home the gold medal in the 2024 Copa De Marianas Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu No-Gi Tournament last Saturday held in the University of Guam Fieldhouse.

As for Kier Agda—from the baseball diamond and back to the mats—he snatched up silver in the Gi Tournament.

In the Male White Belt Adult Rooster Division, the 23-year-old Kitami from Baret Submissions beat out Atos Jiu-Jitsu Guam's Jasper Eola via the guillotine submission in the gold medal match. In Kitami's first match, he held off his opponent via the triangle submission.

Agda, in the Male Blue Belt Adult Ultra Heavy Division, faced off against Heights Academy Guam's James Guerrero, in the finals and lost via points.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, silver medalist of the Gi Division, Kier Agda, gold medalist James Guerrero, and bronze medalist Jordan Rosario in the Male Blue Belt Adult Ultra Heavy Division of the 2024 Copa De Marianas Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Gi/No-Gi Tournament last Saturday held in the University of Guam Fieldhouse.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gold medalist in the No-Gi Division, Masaki Kitami, center, poses with silver medalist Jasper Eola, and bronze medalist, Jaren Cruz in the Male White Belt Adult Rooster Division of the 2024 Copa De Marianas Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Gi/No-Gi Tournament last Saturday held in the University of Guam Fieldhouse.

Agda originally entered in the 93kg Heavy Division, but no one else did, so instead of winning gold by default, decided to move up to the 100.2kg+ Ultra Heavy Division.

The 24-year-old Agda was

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Sinapalo, Tinian co-ed ES v-ball teams win games

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Sinapalo Elementary School Lu'aos and Tinian Elementary School Colts won their games on Week 2 of their round-robin matchup in the NMIVA-PSS Co-ed Elementary School Volleyball Tournament 2023-2024 at the Oleai Sports Complex last Friday.

Sinapalo I and II won and lost a game each, while the Colts won three of their games.

Sinapalo I's team made up of Bernice Cayabyab, Brandee Pinaula, Julia Mosqueda, Aldean Masga, Manuel Pinaula, Isaiah Taimanao, and Lucas Taitano dominated Grace Christian Academy, 21-15.

Later, Sinapalo II's team of Alena Mendiola, Kamea Blas, Jacinta Quitugua, Niarah Muna, Alesmo Atalig, Mohammad Alamgir, and Jimmy Aguero, defeated Garapan Elementary School I, 21-17.

As for Tinian, they won their first game via forfeit against GES I; their next game against Gregorio T. Camacho II, they won, 21-6; and in their last game, they bested Saipan Inter-

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LEIGH GASES

Sinapalo Elementary School II's volleyball team with coach Mack James, back row third from left, pose with PSS Athletic director Nick Gross, back row, center, after their game in the NMIVA-PSS Co-ed Elementary School Volleyball Tournament 2023-2024 at the Oleai Sports Complex last Friday.

TNB, Team Glaziers champs again in 3x3

LEIGH GASES

From left, champions Team Nesian Built's Douglas Schmidt, Coby Santos, and Preston Basa, (not pictured Jack Lizama) pose for a photo after the championship game of the Marianas Arsenal 3x3 Series at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Team Nesian Built and Team Glaziers continued their domination on the court as they remain the champions in the NMIBF Marianas Arsenal 3x3 Basketball Series at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

TNB defeated Net Rippers, 21-9, last Saturday, while as there were only two teams in the women's division, Team Glaziers and The Angry Penne (Alley-Oopsie Daisies) went head-to-head in a best out-of-five matchup last Tuesday, winning three straight games for

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